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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and identify societal, institutional, organizational, family, and individual factors associated with American Indian students' completion and noncompletion rates in a tribal college in northern Minnesota. Data collection included a series of in-depth interviews and two focus groups with seven completers and six noncompleters from a tribal college in northeastern Minnesota. All data were collected between January and April, 2000. The study found that both the completers and the noncompleters were confronted with five key issues: physical abuse; emotional abuse; alcoholism; poverty; racism, and the "crabs in a bucket" notion. "Crab in a bucket" refers to the phenomenon that when any member of the community attempts to leave it for higher education or better employment, others in the community try to retain that person by shaming, insulting, teasing, or ostracizing him/her. Although the completers and the noncompleters of the tribal college faced substantially the same issues, it was found that the degree completers had a stronger sense of resiliency, a higher level of self-esteem, and a stronger orientation toward goal completion than did the non-completers. (Contains 178 references.) (GC)

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American Indian Completers and Noncompleters in a Tribal and Community College in Northern Minnesota

A PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

Jean Kelly Echternacht Ness

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

David R. Johnson, Advisor
James M. Brown, Advisor

May, 2001

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As I reflect on what I have learned about retention, role models, and resilience, I realize that I have my own story. My mother and father were strong role models in my life. They taught me to embrace and to never stop learning. My mother taught me the gift of the written word--how to read and write it. My father taught me to never give up. My brother, Jon, taught me to write more concisely. My sister, Jane, taught me to take risks. To all of them I am deeply grateful.

In my adult life, I have had the joy of working with fine professionals, those that cherish their work with and for individuals with special needs. I have learned from each of them. David R. Johnson has encouraged me while always demanding excellence. James M. Brown has supported my interests and championed my efforts. Tom Peacock has shared his special insights and wisdom and has invited me to "put my thinking cap on." James R. Stone III has challenged me to convince him that a qualitative study is viable. I am grateful to these men for sharing their time and expertise with me.

I have been honored to work with many in the American Indian community over the past six years. They have shared their stories, traditions, history, and friendship with me. I have learned so much, but it is only a beginning. I am honored to have had this time with them. The 13 people from the American Indian community that I interviewed for this study were willing, open, and honest. We shared our lives with each other and, as a result, I am a different person than before I met them. My gratitude is beyond measure. Finally, to the two special men in my life: Lloyd who has given me unending support and Andy who has given me courage, thank you. I have truly been blessed with their support and love that has nurtured my own resilience.

ABSTRACT

To date, little research has been conducted on the completion and noncompletion of American Indians in reaching their postsecondary goals, in part, because of the small percentage of American Indians students who attend any type of college programs nationwide.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and identify societal, institutional, organizational, family, and individual factors associated with American Indian students' completion and noncompletion rates in a tribal college in northern Minnesota. The research question which drove this study was: What societal, organizational, institutional, family, and individual factors affect the completion and noncompletion of goals of American Indian students in a tribal college? The literature review included an exploration of these factors.

The research design included a series of indepth interviews and two focus groups with 7 completers and 6 non-completers from a tribal college in northeastern Minnesota. The interviewees were all American Indians who had attended from the tribal college and graduated, completed their goals or left school between 1996 and 1999. The data was collected between January and April, 2000. The interviewees ranged in age from 18-60. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were analyzed for themes. Based on this analysis, results of the study were formulated.

The results of the study showed that both the completers and the noncompleters were confronted with five key issues: physical abuse; emotional abuse; alcoholism; poverty; racism, and the "crabs in a bucket" notion. The reaction and consequently the

affects these issues played on each interviewee and their postsecondary goals had to do with their amount of self-esteem, resiliency and goal completion orientation.

Implications based on this study include those for policymakers, postsecondary administrators, secondary administrators, families, individuals, and those for future research.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Since the mid-1950s many researchers have identified students who complete (completers) and those who do not complete (noncompleters) two- and four-year postsecondary education programs (Iffert, 1956; McNeely 1937; Padilla, Trevino, Gonzolez, & Trevino, 1997; Spady, 1970; Summerskill 1962; Tinto, 1993). Several recent studies have also begun to focus on the attrition of minority students in postsecondary education, specifically Hispanic and African American students (Barley & Hafner, 1978). This research, from the standpoint of the institution and the individual student, has underscored a host of factors associated with attrition and persistence. However, little has been written about the unique aspects of persistence and attrition among American Indian college students. A growing number of researchers are beginning to examine the issue of institutional departure from a different angle, from the point of view of successful American Indian students (completers) and what strategies postsecondary programs have used to retain these students (Padilla et al., 1997).

In spite of the extensive research about completers and noncompleters over the past 30 years, there is a critical need to better understand the problems, challenges, and successes that American Indian students encounter during their postsecondary educational experiences. It is especially important to observe the experiences American Indians have had in the tribal colleges and community colleges because these are the settings in which the vast majority of American Indian students are enrolled (Pavel, Rak-Skinner, Cahalan, Tippeconnic, & Stein, 1998). Additional information is needed on the organizational, institutional, individual, and societal factors that enhance or inhibit the

probability of American Indian students completing their postsecondary programs. To date, postsecondary administrators and educators, even those in tribal colleges, know very little about American Indian completers and noncompleters. Without a better understanding of the factors associated with completion and noncompletion, future efforts to improve the postsecondary education participation and completion rates of American Indian students will be hindered.

Background

Retention of All Postsecondary Students

Nationally more students leave their colleges or universities prior to degree completion than stay. Of all the students (2.4 million) who entered higher education for the first time in 1993, over 1.1 million or 46 % left without receiving a degree (Tinto, 1993). When considering all college students, there are several common features that distinguish completers from noncompleters. These student factors have not changed significantly in the past 40 years and they include:

- high academic performance in high school and first year of college
- familial aspirations for college
- advanced educational level of parents
- high personal educational aspirations
- involvement of the student with the college
- intention to remain to graduation
- perception of financial capacity to pay expenses
- receipt of scholarship, grants, and/or part-time employment on campus
- high prestige and cost of institution

- religious affiliation of institution
- on-campus living
- high-quality and utilization (both academic and non-academic) of student support services, especially learning assistance opportunities, advising, and involvement opportunities
- high-quality and frequent student-faculty interaction
- student-institution fit, including moral and social integration, perceived responsiveness of the institution to students' needs, and the congruence between expectations and opportunities for their realization.

(Lenning, Sauer, & Beal, 1980; Padilla, 1998; Pavel, et al., 1997; Tinto, 1993)

Retention of Minority Students in Postsecondary Education

To date, studies on minority students have primarily focused on American, African American and Hispanic students (Astin, 1996; Astone, Nunez-Wormack, 1990; Bailey & Hafner, 1978; Davis, 1995; Pascarella, et al., 1987; Richardson, Simmons, & de los Santos, 1987). These studies have been conducted to explore the factors associated with the successful completion of African American and Hispanic students. Based on this research, three major categories focus on student completion and noncompletion in postsecondary schools: organizational, institutional, or individual (Bailey & Hafner, 1978; Richardson, et al., 1987). Examples of factors or variables related to these categories follow.

The significant organizational factors include:

- campus environment which encourages student involvement and success
- location

- significant minority-faculty involvement
- systematic strategies for promoting minority students/all students
- minority enrollments of 20% or more on campus
- institutional policies.

The significant institutional factors include:

- significant minority-faculty involvement
- early intervention strategies
- availability of a strong support person/system.

The significant individual factors that play a role are:

- preparedness for college
- positive self-concept (confidence, strength, determination, and independence)
- understands and deals with racism (able to handle racist system realistically)
- realistic self-appraisal (recognizes and accepts any academic or background deficiencies and tries to improve self)
- prefers long range goals to short-term or immediate needs (accepts deferred gratification).

American Indian Student Retention

American Indian students who attend tribal colleges differ from other minority students as well as from students in general. Tribal colleges are institutions of higher learning, usually two-year colleges, founded and run by American Indians and, in most cases, located on Indian reservations (Boyer, 1997). Of all minority populations in postsecondary education, American Indians are the most underrepresented. Wells' 1989 findings as described in Padilla et al. (1997) indicate that persistence or degree-

completion rates in four-year colleges are estimated at 40% for African American students, 47% for Hispanic students, and 25% for American Indian students. According to a U.S. House of Representatives research report entitled, Participation of New High School Graduates in Higher Education Report (Fine, 1998), only 459 American Indian students in Minnesota graduated from high school in 1987. Of this number 148, or 32.2%, entered postsecondary school as new freshman in the fall of 1987. This is contrasted with a 42.9% enrollment rate among all students that same year. In 1996, of 469 American Indian high school graduates in Minnesota, 139, or 30% entered postsecondary schools as freshman, compared with a 33.4 enrollment rate among all entering freshman. Since 1976, the majority (51%) of American Indian and Alaskan Native students have predominately attended two-year institutions, while the majority of the overall population have attended four-year institutions (Pavel et al., 1998).

The American Indian Educational Experience

In 1990 among those in the population 25 years and older, 66% of American Indians had completed high school, compared to 75% of the total U.S. population; 9% had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 20% of the total U.S. population; and 3% held graduate or professional degrees, compared to 7% of the total U. S. population (Pavel, et al., 1998). The dropout rate of American Indian students in high school was reported at 35.5%. In 1992 the dropout rate of American Indians was 56% and 46% for Alaskan Native compared to 67% of the total U. S. population (Cahape & Howley, 1992).

The 1990 census reported 42,945 American Indians between the ages of 16-65 currently reside on Minnesota reservations. The same census reported that 14.5% of

Minnesota's adult American Indians were to have completed a postsecondary education program of any kind. Few postsecondary education and training programs effectively reach American Indian students. Major barriers exist such as poor preparation, high drop-out rates from high school, and living in poverty within poor communities (85% of tribal college students are estimated to live below the poverty level). Students are often very involved with family responsibilities (Boyer, 1997). At the very least, in most cases, families do not support or encourage family members to pursue postsecondary education (Garrod & Larimore, 1997). In light of these issues, what is typically thought of as a simple problem-- i.e., no child care, no gas for the car, the car won't start-- quickly becomes an insurmountable one because there is no back-up support plan. Some of the major obstacles in attending postsecondary school for American Indians are psychological in nature. The college experience is foreign and intimidating and, consequently, enormous fear is attached to attending postsecondary school (Boyer, 1997; Garrod & Larimore, 1997).

These issues and more place American Indians at risk in educational and employment settings. In addition, the incidence of alcoholism among American Indians is well documented. Minnesota Department of Health, Division of Human Services, Indian Health estimated the alcoholism rate to be 49% among Minnesota Indian adults. It is also estimated that 95%-100% are affected by alcoholism, directly or indirectly by its repercussions.

Throughout history, kinship has been the primary association for American Indians. The second greatest attribute of identity has always been the land, or more accurately, one's relationship to the land. A third defining attribute is a sense of

community. "But above all, what has held all the diverse peoplehoods [of American Indian tribes] together has been kinship" (Thornton, 1998, p. 44). Clearly family and cultural factors have had as significant an impact on the successful participation and completion of American Indians in higher education as it has had on all aspects of American Indian life. This is critical to understanding in the historical framework and identity of American Indians as stated by Garrod and Larimore (1997):

> For many American Indians, personal and cultural identity, as well as spirituality, are inextricably intertwined with connections to family, community, tribe, and homeland. This intricate web of interrelationships and the sustaining power of the values with which we were raised pushed us toward higher learning while at the same time pulling us back to our home communities (p. 3).

The Two-Year College Experience

Current data on part-time and full-time students support the notion that the overall rate of first-year attrition, certainly in the four-year sector, has not changed considerably in the past twenty years (Tinto, 1993). The only significant change has been in the most selective institutions where attrition rates have declined nearly 20% between 1983 and 1992. However, in the least restrictive institutions, many of which are two-year institutions, first-year attrition had increased to a high of 49.6 % in 1992 (Tinto, 1993). There had also been a decline in the institutional rate of completion from 1983 to 1992 for two-year and four-year institutions. While two-year degree completion declined only slightly--less than 1%--rates of completion at four-year institutions declined significantly by 4%. Many changes have occurred in colleges over this period of time to create some possible reasons for the decline in completion. Some of those causes are listed below.

- The mix of students attending higher education has changed.
- More students are attending part-time.
- More students are working while they attend college.
- As measured by Scholastic Aptitude Test the academic credentials of college-bound high school seniors scores had declined.
- More students are entering college who need some type of remediation.
- The levels of financial aid available have declined.

Of all postsecondary institutions, the less selective colleges--such as tribal and community colleges--have felt a disproportionate burden of all these factors in the student population they serve. For students in tribal and community colleges to be completers, the causes of attrition must be addressed by organizational and institutional decisions that involve the social and intellectual development of their students. Organizational and institutional commitments to students reflect the primary source of students' commitment to the institution and students' involvement in their own learning and postsecondary goal completion (Tinto, 1993).

The Tribal College Experience

The first tribal college was Navajo Community College, established in 1968 in New Mexico as a part of a movement on reservations to rebuild and create a stronger sense of culture. This landmark institution was an innovative way to meet the long unmet postsecondary needs of tribal Indians (Oppelt, 1990). Since 1968, 33 tribal colleges have been established. All but six of the 33 tribal colleges that are members of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) are two-year institutions. AIHEC is a national organization of all the tribal college presidents.

Tribal colleges make college education more accessible in three ways. First, they are geographically accessible because they are located on reservations. Second, they are educationally accessible because many of the course contents reflect cultural relevance. Finally, they are accessible emotionally to American Indian students because tribal colleges offer strong support services as well as American Indian faculty/staff. The opportunity for American Indians for education and training at tribal colleges has created the hope that more American Indians would become prepared to participate fully in American society. Tribal colleges create a bridge between the Indian and non-Indian world, making the Western model of higher education more accessible and useful to American Indian communities. With the development of tribal colleges, going to college is no longer synonymous with assimilation. Since their inception, tribal colleges are strengthening reservations and tribal culture. The mission of tribal colleges means that higher education can serve the practical needs of tribes. Although most tribal colleges are two-year colleges and some call themselves community colleges, they do not have the community college philosophy of local control and dedication to local needs. Instead they are uniquely Indian institutions. The experience of attending a tribal college better prepares American Indian students to live in two worlds--the majority culture, and their own culture. A study in 1994 indicated that about 8% of all American Indians and Alaska Native college students attended tribal college (Pavel, et al., 1998). Boyer (1997) found that:

> If education is considered the key to social renewal among American Indians, then the most significant development in the American Indian community since

> World War II was the development of tribally controlled colleges, institutions of higher learning founded by tribes and governed by Indians. (p. 1)

This study took place at a combined tribal and community college in northeastern Minnesota. The tribal college in this study is one of the 33 tribal colleges in the United States. As stated in the college catalogue, mission of this tribal college is to "acknowledge that all students have the potential and the right to reach their greatest potential to become valuable citizens when they are provided with educational to enhance these abilities and supported with life-long learning." This tribal college emphasizes a respect for all cultures and provides unique learning opportunities in a diverse community of students and faculty.

Statement of the Problem

Currently, little is known about societal, organizational, institutional, family, and individual factors that influence completion and noncompletion rates among American Indian students enrolled in tribal colleges. What is not clearly understood is what happens to American Indian students from the point of enrollment through graduation or early exit. Concern over what happens during program participation is what Padilla (1997) called the "black box" of the postsecondary experience. Little research has been conducted on the completion and noncompletion of American Indians in reaching their postsecondary goals, in part because of the small percentage of American Indians students who attend postsecondary programs nationwide.

In 1961, only 66 American Indians graduated from four-year institutions nationwide (Boyer, 1997). By 1976 American Indians represented 0.2% of the total postsecondary education enrollment (Bailey & Hafner, 1978). Attrition rates for

American Indian students has remained notoriously high over the years. According to research done by the National Center for Educational Statistics, Office of Research and Improvement (1998), over the past two decades the percentage of American Indian and Alaskan Native students enrolling in colleges increased 64% from 76,000 in 1976 to 127,000 in 1998. This is compared to a 30% enrollment increase of all other students. Since 1976 there has been a 98% increase in the number of American Indian women entering college, this is the single greatest cause for the 64% enrollment increase. But enrollment does not mean graduation or completion of programs.

In 1992, Tierney reported that for every 20 American Indian students who enter a four-year institution, three will receive a college degree. American Indian and Alaskan Native retention and persistence rates in NCAA institutions remains consistently lower than retention and persistence rates for all other students (Pavel, et al, 1998). At the tribal college in this study, the 1997-98 school-year figures showed that 24% of the student body dropped out during the course of the year. Sixteen percent graduated with a Associate of Science (A.S.) degree within three years of entrance at the tribal college in this study. The remainder of students are described by administrators at this tribal college as those who drift in and out of school from time to time with no record of completion of degree or certificate program requirements.

Statistics and percentages vary from study to study about the completion rate of American Indian students in postsecondary education. Recently, the trend in the past ten years seems to indicate that more American Indians are attending postsecondary and getting degrees at some point in their lives (Pavel, et al., 1998). But how and why

American Indians complete do or do not complete their postsecondary programs remains largely unknown.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore and identify societal, organizational, institutional, family, and individual factors associated with American Indian students' completion and noncompletion rates in a tribal college in northern Minnesota. Although this study was limited to one tribal college, the identified factors associated with American Indian student completion or noncompletion in this single setting are useful to postsecondary institutions in developing and promoting retention services. The information and findings derived from this study may also be used to make recommendations to state and local, tribal council leaders, state educational agencies, and community colleges serving diverse student groups and others for the development of policies that enhance opportunities for postsecondary American Indian student success.

Research Questions

The following questions were addressed through this study:

- What societal factors --i.e. racism in the community or college; difficulty with socio-alienation; and cultural integration--influence American Indian student completion and noncompletion of postsecondary programs?
- What tribal college organizational factors --i.e. advisors, registration process, and support programs--influence American Indian student completion and noncompletion of postsecondary programs?

- What tribal college institutional factors--i.e. faculty, cultural relevance, and curriculum--influence American Indian students' completion and noncompletion rates?
- What family factors of American Indians affect the completion and noncompletion of their postsecondary goals?
- What individual factors--i.e. motivation, readiness for college, study skills, and problem solving ability--in tribal colleges affect American Indian students completion and noncompletion of their postsecondary goals?

Definitions

American Indian: Today there are many terms that are commonly used to describe the indigenous peoples or any of the original peoples of North American who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition (Pavel et al., 1998). Politically, in many cases the term Native American is used. There is a gradual shift back toward a simpler term, Indians. However the preference by many tribal leaders and others reflects the legal language of treaties and other documents securing Indian rights. These documents use the term American Indians. The experience of this researcher is that the term American Indian is the one most commonly used among the tribal people themselves, and in most readings. Therefore, in the field study and in all research conducted within the study, American Indian is the term used.

Completers: In this study the term completers was used to describe those postsecondary American Indian students who completed the goal/s they set out to reach in their postsecondary experience. Whether certificate, or transfer to four-year school to complete their education. However, completer may also refer to the completion of a

single targeted course or series of courses that prepared the individual to meet some set intrinsic or extrinsic goal.

Noncompleters: In this study the term noncompleters was used to describe those postsecondary American Indian students who did not meet the goals they set out to reach in their postsecondary experience.

Resiliency: In this study the term resiliency means one's ability to overcome, rise above, or recover from the difficulties in one's life and maintain a balance to complete or achieve goals.

Tribal College: Tribally controlled community colleges are those two-and four-year chartered and controlled by a federally recognized tribe. Their principle mission is to provide comprehensive academic and occupational education which is culturally relevant to their tribal communities (Stein, 1992). These institutions of higher learning are predominately two-year colleges and in most cases are located on Indian reservations. (Boyer, 1997). There are 33 tribal colleges in the United States and Canada that are apart of the AIHEC today.

Limitations

The first limitation of the study is that the researcher, who is non-Indian, conducted interviews and focus groups with American Indians. This is both a limitation and a strength. That the researcher does not come from an American Indian community, may have been a limitation in that the American Indian participants may not have felt as comfortable telling as much as they would have if the interviewer were American Indian. However, some American Indians may have felt more comfortable sharing information with the researcher for that very reason; they felt more comfortable speaking to a non-

Indian. In either case, the fact that the researcher and the participants came from different cultures had a bearing in the collection of data.

The second limitation of the study is that the researcher used a small sample from one tribal and community college in northeastern Minnesota. Although the sampling was chosen because it was believed to be representative of the typical population at the tribal college studied, it may not have been representative of other tribal colleges in the United States.

A third limitation of the study is that data was collected from 13 students, two men and eleven women who between 1996-1999 attended the tribal college. This proportion of females to men was selected because, nationally in tribal colleges as well as at the tribal college studied, at the time of this study, 75% or more of the American Indian college students were female. Thirteen former students were selected because this was a large enough number to collect a variety of responses, yet a small enough number to be able to complete the study in the time allowed.

Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions guided this study:

- American Indian students often require multiple support services such as child care, transportation, additional financial aid, and structured cultural connections in and outside of college to complete their postsecondary programs.
- The individual goals of American Indian students relate to their community and family.
- The family relationships of American Indian students both promote and hinder students' postsecondary success.

- The qualitative design used to collect information from American Indian students was culturally competent and collected in a culturally appropriate manner.
- Responses of the sample in the study accurately reflected the opinions of the targeted population.
- The data provided from this study would be of value in both planning and policy development to the American Indian Higher Education Consortium of Tribal Colleges (AIHEC) in general and the tribal college studied, specifically.

Summary

Although much is known about retention of most students in postsecondary schools, little is known about minority student retention, and even less in known about American Indian student retention. This study looked at the organizational, institutional, individual, family, and societal factors that led to completion and noncompletion of postsecondary goals of American Indian students. The results of this study could be used to improve the quality of the delivery of services to American Indian students at the tribal college studied as well as at other tribal colleges. Results may also be useful to secondary institutions as a guide to specific skills high school American Indian students must have to successfully make the transition to a tribal college. Results may also be useful to American Indian postsecondary funding agencies as a means to promote access to postsecondary for American Indian students. And finally, results enhanced knowledge of the self-determination skills necessary for American Indians to successfully pursue postsecondary education in a tribal college.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to examine relevant literature as a means of establishing background and foundation for the methodological approaches used to conduct the research in this study. The chapter contains the supportive thoughts, facts, concepts, and research necessary to understand the factors contributing to the completion and noncompletion of American Indian students in postsecondary education. Although there exists a substantial body of research exists concerning student retention and student attrition, very little of the research has focused on the American Indian student in higher education.

The references represent a thorough and exhaustive search of the literature. A search was conducted based on reference lists from journal articles, texts, dissertations, and resource lists from American Indian graduate students. Searches were also conducted on databases on numerous web sites. The sources referenced in this chapter are both the best and most recent. When review of the literature became repetitious, where the same sources were cited over and over, a saturation point had been reached. A summary of the literature review is in Table 1: Factors Associated with Completers and Noncompleters.

This chapter is divided into five parts, reflecting one way of categorizing the information available on retention and attrition of students in their postsecondary experience. Part I is a review of key literature sources dealing with retention of all students in postsecondary education. Part II is a discussion of the literature focusing on minority student retention, specifically that of Hispanic and African American students.

Part III is a review of the literature on the experiences of American Indians in postsecondary education programs. In this section the societal, organizational, institutional, family, and individual factors that relate to retention and attrition of these students are examined. Part IV reviews literature on the two-year college and Part V provides information on tribal colleges.

Part I: Retention of All Postsecondary Students

Overview

Few issues have generated as much interest or concern in postsecondary education over the past 40 years as the persistence and attrition of students. Over the past four decades many researchers have investigated students who complete--i.e., completers--and those who do not complete--i.e.,noncompleters--in traditional two-and four-year postsecondary programs (Padilla et al.1997; Tinto, 1993). Present and future trends in population growth and in participation in higher education reveal that people of color in the United States are a dramatically increasingly but seriously undereducated segment of society. By 2000, minorities are estimated to account for roughly 30% of the population (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990c in Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990). Yet high school graduation rates are significantly lower for nearly all minority groups than for the majority. Entry rates of college-age minorities into higher education are actually shrinking. Recruitment and retention of minorities are issues postsecondary institutions will continue to face well into the 21st century. Academic leaders should get all faculty involved in the process of retention as well as provide for sufficient support services. The entire college community should become intellectually as well as morally sensitive

to the importance of ensuring the diversity of the institutions (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990).

Attrition and Retention

There are several forms of attrition. For example, students may voluntarily withdraw because a lack of congruency exists between individuals and both the intellectual climates and the social systems of the institution. A student may leave due to academic dismissal because the individual lacked both intellectual and social development to be successful in college (Tinto, 1975).

There are many types of retention. Some definitions are when a student graduates:

- in the time designated for a degree or certificate from a program
- after the time designated, but completing the requirements
- at the institution of entry
- at an institution other than that which one initially enrolled
- in the curricular program initially entered, and
- in a curricular program other than one in which initially enrolled (Lenning et al. 1980).

Another type of retention involves personal attainment. For some students attendance at a postsecondary institution for the purpose of attaining a personal goal may be more important than the achievement of a degree or certificate. Community college students often enroll to obtain personally desired skills or knowledge, to upgrade their skills and knowledge, to enrich personal life, or to take advantage of an employer-paid training opportunity. The completion of these personal goals is also considered in the

retention literature (Lenning et al. 1980). It is self-defeating for institutions to classify a students as a dropout if that student completed what she/he originally intended, even if less than a two-year degree or other institutionally defined programs.

Retention begins with recruitment (Seidman, 1989). In two-year colleges, the attrition reduction process is reasonably high during the pre-enrollment and enrollment stages of student tenure in college (Alfred, 1983). Admission materials and personal contacts are the first opportunity the potential student has to sensing whether an institution is a good fit. Information given to students must be realistic. Discussions with recruiters, faculty, and staff must be honest. As Noel stated in Seidman (1989), it is critically important to make a good student/institution match early--this means the right institution, the right program, and the right course entry level.

External Forces that Affect Retention

The ability of a student to become integrated into institution life has been shown to be key to retention. Around this notion, colleges plan activities to integrate and support students as they adapt themselves into their college environment (Seidman, 1989). Effective admissions and counseling procedures can greatly support this process (Seidman, 1992). However, there are many external forces that may positively or negatively influence students' decision to attend and become integrated into an institution.

Some positive external forces are:

- parents who value a college education and stress its importance early in a student's high school experience (Pavel & Padilla, 1993);

- peers from similar socioeconomic groups who have aspirations to go to college and value a college;
- cultural values that emphasize learning, intellectual achievement, and higher education;
- information on many colleges and their opportunities that includes admission, financial aid, and programs of study;
- teachers and counselors who exhibit confidence in the student's potential for college;
- information that examines how college helps individuals reach their professional and personal goals; and
- exposure to individuals with postsecondary degrees who act as role models.

Some of the negative external forces are:

- housing, roommate, or transportation problems;
- work demands, family demands, child care, and other conflicts with time/energy;
- social demands;
- rejection of family/friends who do not value college;
- discrimination; and
- lack of money.

Financial aid has played an important role in access to higher education, especially for minority students (St. John & Noell, 1989). A study on price response to enrollment decisions conducted by St. John (1990) revealed that all forms of financial aid--grants, loans, and work--were effective in promoting enrollment. For example, 100 dollars of aid of any type of financial had a stronger influence on enrollment than did a $100 reduction in tuition. Low-income students were more responsive to increases in

grant aid than to increases in loans or work study. High-income students were not responsive to changes in aid amounts. Financial aid is also an efficacious mechanism for increasing competition between public and private institutions. Financial aid increases the overall probability that a student will matriculate to some institution, be it private or public (Tierney, 1980).

Internal Forces that Affect Retention

Internal forces also have either a positive or negative influence on an individual's choice to attend and become integrated into an institution.

Positive internal forces are:

- academic skill and achievement;
- motivation to succeed and persist;
- enjoyment of learning;
- career aspirations;
- self-confidence to accept challenges and hard times;
- pre-college self-concept which influences academic behavior in college (Pascarella, et al., 1987);
- values that recognize the importance of college; and
- identification to positive role models with college degrees.

Negative internal forces are:

- procrastination;
- loneliness;
- lack of assertiveness or self-advocacy skills;
- fear of success/fear of failure; and

- boredom (Noel, Levitz, Saluri, and Assoc., 1986).

Until recently research studies have addressed the study of student retention largely without considering the diversity of undergraduates. Generally there has been a lack of sensitivity to the kinds of issues that these students have brought to postsecondary institutions, both externally and internally, that affect retention. Often personal growth and maturity occur when students must meet many external and internal issues simultaneously related to their responsibilities to work, family, and education. However, these issues are often not reflected in the structure and organization of support services and course offerings (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998).

Factors Leading to Retention and Attrition

A significant body of literature has revealed that secondary school performance and grade point average (GPA) is the best predictor of future academic performance at postsecondary institutions (Astin et al., 1996; Bean, 1982; Bean & Bradley, 1986; Getzlaf, et. al, 1984; Pantages & Creedon, 1978; Schwartz, 1989; Tinto, 1993). However, other studies (Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Terenzini,1986; Witt & Handal, 1984) indicated that what happens to a student after he or she enrolls at an institution may be as important to the ultimate persistence such as school performance and GPA. Schwartz (1989) found that students are most likely to persist when they have a strong commitment to completing, are satisfied with their academic performance and the support services, and receive support for school responsibilities from family and employers.

Attrition

For whatever reasons more students leave their college or university prior to degree attainment than stay. Of the nearly 2.4 million students who in 1993 entered

higher education for the first time, over 1.5 million left their first institution without receiving a degree. Of those, approximately 1.1 million left higher education and never complete either a two-year or four-year degree program (Tinto, 1993).

In studying the departure of students, it is clear that the first year is especially important to student persistence. Based on self-reported data collected every year from two-year and four-year institutions by the American College Testing Survey (ACT) in 1992, first-year attrition represented 53.3% in four-year colleges and 67.7% in two-year colleges of all college leavers. This data represents fulltime and first-time students only. Therefore the numbers underestimate first-year institutional leaving among all students, some of whom are part-time, nonmatriculated, or transfer students from other institutions (Astin, Tsui, & Avalos,1996; Tinto, 1993). Students with low grades are three times less likely to complete college (23%) which indicates an important reason why students leave college (Astin, 1996; Bean, 1982).

Attrition in selective schools

Data from the1992 ACT report showed that the highly selective schools have much lower rates of first-year attrition. For example, according to the 1992 report, highly selective schools which require an SAT score of 1100 or higher had an 8% percent attrition rate after the first year. Those institutions that had open enrollment or SAT scores of less than 700 had a 45.5% mean first-year attrition among fulltime students. These rates of attrition have not changed much in the past 20 years of study by the ACT. In spite of this general stability, there are some notable percentages to mention. The greatest change has been seen in a 20% lower attrition rate in the most selective colleges.

In the least restrictive institutions, many of whom are two-year institutions, the attrition rate has increased to a high of 45.5 % (Astin et al., 1996; Tinto, 1993).

The high noncompletion rate in the two-year colleges may, in small part, be attributable to the influence of college type and peer influences that encourage students to consider leaving an academic track for a vocational or employment track (Anderson, 1981). The decline in the rate of institutional completion is more noticeable in the less selective schools that also have a disproportionate number of the changing mix of student population (Tinto, 1993). Demographic projections for the next decade or two suggest that the heterogeneity of the undergraduate student body will continue to change dramatically (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998).

Based on ACT data from freshmen entering college in 1986, 50.2% of all full-time four-year college entrants earned their bachelor's degree in the institution of initial registration within five years of entry. Among two-year colleges, degree completion within three years of initial registration was reported at 43.4% among fulltime students (Tinto, 1993).

There are many reasons why a high percentage of students do not complete their degree program. Some believe that the most prevalent characteristic of persisters is fulltime attendance, while the most prevalent characteristics of nonpersisters is part-time attendance (Brawer, 1995). Some reasons for noncompletion are gender related, as described in a study done by Bean and Vesper (1994) who found that social and relational factors such as contact with advisors, friends, and living on campus had a greater effect on the satisfaction of females than men. Pascarella found (1986) the most positive types of social integration that lead to persistence for females were activities

exercising leadership skills. Encouragement from parents and occupational certainty had a significant effect on the satisfaction of men. Pascarella (1986) found that knowing a faculty member or administrator personally had by far the strongest positive impact on persistence among male students. Gates and Creamer (1984) suggested that students in vocational programs tended to persist at higher rates than those students in academic areas. They speculated this to be true because career goals were clearer compared to academic goals. They concluded that if students in academic curricular areas were supported by faculty to become increasingly career conscious and more thoughtful about their future, they may persist in the postsecondary goals at a greater rate. Bean and Bradley (1986) found that females were much more likely to have a higher GPA if they felt satisfied with their college experience than if they did not. Confidence in being a student and having courses of interest were important variables for both sexes.

Faculty Involvement

Of extreme importance in the first and second years of college to all students was the formal contact students had with faculty. This includes the quality of instruction, enthusiasm and the ability of faculty to connect the subject matter to career and future goals. This has a dramatic impact on students' level of satisfaction on college (Bean, 1982; Bean & Vesper, 1994). A study conducted by Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) found positive associations between the amount of informal student-faculty contact and students' satisfaction with the college, educational aspirations, intellectual and personal development, academic achievement, and freshman and sophomore persistence in college. This informal contact was especially valuable when it focused on intellectual/literary or artistic, interests, values issues, or future career concerns. As role

models, faculty help acculturate students into the world of ideas (Pascarella, 1980; Seidman, 1991). Beyond role modeling, the development of relationships between faculty and students creates a level of trust. When instructors ask students to move into new areas of learning, trust relationships are an integral part of the learning process. If students have fears of humiliation, rejection, or being revealed as incompetent, the risk is too great and attrition often occurs (Dehyle, 1992). Faculty and administrators should be reminded of how important they are to the overall impact of college on student outcomes.

Time well spent

Student retention improves with the more faculty members spend time with students outside the classroom. (Endo & Harpel, 1982). The informal and personal contact with staff and faculty is important for retention and overall educational and personal growth of students. Endo and Harpel (1982) found that frequency and quality of student-faculty interaction has a positive impact on personal, intellectual, and academic outcomes. The frequency of student-faculty interactions has a greater effect on intellectual outcomes than on personal/social outcomes. Endo and Harpel (1982) also found that faculty helpfulness affects progress toward students' intellectual goals as well as students' overall satisfaction with the institution.

Organization

In the National Study of Student Learning (NSSL) Pascarella (1996) found that the degree of instructors' organization and preparation for classes may be linked not only to students' general academic achievement but also to the development of higher order and cognitive skills. Faculty mentorships are also a powerful way to promote faculty-student relationships and increase retention (Brawer, 1995). The view of faculty

involvement in student academic and social involvement leads to the recognition of the centrality of the classroom experiences, and the importance of faculty, curriculum, and pedagogy to the student development and achievement (Tinto, 1997). The experiences in the classroom shape both student learning and persistence.

Social Integration

Anderson (1981) found a strong connection between college persistence, work, and residence. Anderson concluded that those students who live on campus and have a work-study job are far more likely to persist in college than those students who live off campus and have off-campus employment. The likelihood of persistence increases even more in the second and third years of college. Bean (1985) found that the affect on students of peer support is of much greater significance to students' retention than informal faculty contact. He also found that students actively shape their social environments. This suggests that postsecondary environments promoting programs and rituals providing student peer support positively affect retention.

Learning communities

An example of one such peer support program is the learning community model (Tinto & Love, 1995; Tinto, Russo, & Kadel, 1994). In this model students took two or more classes together and provided each other with consistent academic and social supports. The model provided students opportunities to value diversity within the community. A continuity of topics across courses was also provided in order to allow faculty to better support students academically and to focus on broad themes.

Eaton & Bean (1995) found that students who take active approaches to learning and social situations in college are better integrated academically and socially. In

addition, Pascarella (1996) found that students' participation in racial and cultural awareness workshops and their interpersonal contact with diverse peers promotes openness to cultural and racial diversity. Furthermore, students who are more active in response to their social and academic situations are more likely to persist than those who are passive and avoidant. Institutions that strive to promote students' sense of academic fit and integration have greater retention rates. In light of these research findings and the importance students play in shaping their own positive social environments, Pascarella (1996) suggested the need to pay closer attention to institutional programming and interventions that provide for understanding and supporting students' differences.

Nontraditional students

Students, especially older nontraditional ones who experience a greater number of academic problems that lead to academic adjustment are more likely to drop out after one semester of postsecondary school (Farbaugh-Dorkins, 1991). For non-traditional students, social integration variables play only a small role in retention. This is due, in part to social variables from the outside environment, such as family responsibilities. These variables are of greater importance to nontraditional students than is college social integration (Bean & Metzner, 1985).

Motivation

Students need to develop the motivation and learning skills to improve their grades so they do not drop out. Practical techniques which have been proven to be successful exist. One such example is supplemental instruction (SI). SI has been found, since the 1970s to be successful in helping college students earn better grades, refine applied learning skills, and increase retention. SI also helps students learn what it takes

to succeed in college (Congos & Schoeps, 1998, 1997). However, programs such as SI that require students to seek out these program may not reach students because students who need programs such as SI the most, those at the highest levels of risk, tend to avoid such supports. For SI, and other similar programs to be successful at improving persistence, advertising for the programs must appearing welcoming, non-threatening, easy to access, and positive. Retention programs should monitor students and be proactive and they should be sensibly intrusive (Eaton & Bean, 1995; Farbaugh-Dorkins, 1991).

Other reasons why high percentages of students do not complete higher education is a reflection of the overall changing demographics in the United States. For example:

- the increasing mix of students attending higher education is no longer homogeneous;
- the proportion of student who work while attending college is higher;
- many students are delaying their postsecondary education until many years after high school;
- Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores have declined;
- there is an increase in the number of students who need some form of remediation when they enter college; and
- financial aid has shrunk overall, causing an increasing shift away from grants and toward loans.

Institutional Factors

There are also factors at the institution that affect retention over and above student characteristics. Astin found (1996) that students from different racial groups are affected in very similar ways by the characteristics of the institution they attend. The prestige and

high selectivity of an institution have a much to do with the retention graduation rates of its students. The higher cost, more prestigious colleges have higher retention and graduation rates. In addition, religiously affiliated colleges have greater retention than other types of colleges (Astin, 1996; Lenning et al., 1980). Each institution must examine carefully how students are interacting in the campus environment to discover the likely targets of retention and intervention programs (Hossler, 1984).

Image

A campus that has a desirable image, strong social supports, and at which students receive a sense of belonging and identity tends to offer students a reason to be loyal. This is especially true of women and African American students. The findings of a study done by Tomlinson and Cope (1988) found that perceived social supports correctly predicted the persistence or non-persistence of nearly 70% of the Caucasian students and more than 70% of the African American students in their study. Extracurricular student programs and outreach programs offered for parents and prospective students also had a dramatic affect on the students' sense of belonging (Bean, 1982; Bean & Bradley, 1986; Lenning et al. 1980).

Variety of choices

Another institutional factor is the offering of major fields. Institutions at which many students enroll in fields such as business, psychology, or other sciences those colleges can plan to have higher-than-expected retention rates. On the other hand, institutions where large numbers of students are enrolled in engineering can plan to have lower-than-expected rates of retention. As Terenzini et al. (1993) noted, "if involvement is the central mechanism by which students maximize the range and extent of their

learning opportunities, the route to involvement remains circuitous and as yet poorly mapped (p. 14)." Terenzini (1993) identified a number of implications that could promote the involvement of students in one or more aspects of their new college community so to increase inclusion and minimize isolation. Those suggested implications for faculty members, administrators, and institutional researchers include:

- promotion of an awareness of how different transition is for minority students based on their ethnic background, cultural experiences, and exposure to college;
- validation early to students that they can succeed, that they can do college level work, that their ideas and opinions have value, and they are worthy of faculty and staff attention;
- involvement of faculty in orientation programs so students make contact with faculty as early as possible;
- involvement/orientation for parents, spouses, and other family members of students' of especially first generation students so that these family members understand the expectations and nature of academic and college demands;
- recognition of the importance of the learning that goes on in and out of classrooms and how these experiences should connect to the academic/intellectual mission of the college;
- recognition that institutions must change to accommodate the transition and learning needs of diverse/underprepared/first generation/ nontraditional students; and
- understanding that new students need a sense of self-esteem.

One method of helping to prepare minority students for the postsecondary environment consists of precollegiate programs in which colleges and universities

intervene in the lives of minority youth long before they graduate from high school to enhance their exposure and perceptions of higher education. One such program is Upward Bound. This program was established as part of the TRIO programs in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. TRIO, so named because it was one of the original three programs--now there are seven--designed by the U. S. Department of Education in 1964. The purpose of TRIO is to provide support services to low-income, first-generation, and /or students with disabilities. Upward Bound was designed to assist high school students from disadvantaged backgrounds in preparing for postsecondary education. Programs such as Upward Bound assure minority students the opportunity to take advantage of the expanded admissions opportunities which are available to them (Shom, 1991).

Pelavin and Kane (1990) found that students' aspirations, along with the courses they take, have as much affect on their college completion as do attendance rates. More specifically, the results of the study indicate that among all minorities and lower income students the math course that had the greatest impact in long range success was geometry. The potential impact of directing high school students through a sequence of courses that included at least algebra and geometry by the tenth grade were potentially powerful strategies for increasing minority and economically disadvantaged students' participation in college.

Promoting Retention

We now know that for a variety of reasons many students take more than four years to complete a four-year degree. Astin (1996) found, however, that those personal attributes that facilitate or inhibit degree completion are very similar for students of

different races. It is not surprising that there is a high relationship between ability and persistence and between socioeconomic status and persistence. Persons of higher ability and of higher socioeconomic status are more likely to complete a four-year degree within six years. However, the likelihood of eventually earning a college degree, especially a four-year degree, is more strongly associated with ability than with socioeconomic status (Tinto, 1993).

College persistence is the product of a complex set of interactions among personal and institutional factors that successfully match student with institution. It is important to consider the interplay between institutional, personal, and external factors when developing and assessing programs aimed at preventing college attrition (Cabrera, et al.,1992). Creamer (1980) suggested a four-step model for increasing student retention.

First, recruit ethically, meaning that retention begins with recruitment. Students who may benefit from instructional programs that are a good fit for them are ethical recruits. Second, orient honestly by informing students exactly what services the college can and cannot provide, which helps students develop an understanding of themselves and the qualities of the institution so they can set realistic personal and academic goals. One such way of orienting students to college is the freshman orientation program. A study conducted by Fidler (1991) showed a significantly higher return rate of sophomores who have participated in freshman orientation programs than those who do not. Terenzini and Pascarella in Hossler (1984) emphasized that what happens to students after they arrive on campus and how they integrate those experiences are the most important elements of the student attrition process. Third, inform continuously by providing accurate college publications, necessary procedures, and standard communication of

academic progress. Fourth, advise developmentally. Offer regular training for counselors and faculty on advising, promote regular advising, promote achievement/grades, and promote involvement in co-curriculars.

Alfred (1983) suggested the following administrative activities for increased retention:

- administrations should transfer the phenomenon of student attrition into a college-wide problem, one that affects subcultures in the institutional setting;
- inservice training should be implemented for all faculty and staff on understanding the unique problems that high-risk students face in the college environment;
- careful definition should be given to attrition in the institution by asking the question, "Is attrition always bad?";
- efforts should be made to streamline admissions, registration, and orientation procedures prior to enrollment;
- pre-college orientation programs should be individualized for special interest groups to immediately build identity and community with students;
- ensure that recruitment should be honest and forthright;
- major emphasis should be placed on the development of remedial courses in two-year colleges;
- student attrition data should be collected by institutions on a semester-by-semester basis and reported to faculty and administration regularly; and
- highly trained staff should be available for last minute admissions for students who are often characterized as high-risk.

Recruitment

Types of successful recruitment of minority students depends on many factors. Research has shown that five basic conditions must be present in successful recruitment. They are:

- an awareness of cultures of various minority populations including family, normative culture structure, group identity, cultural concepts of time, and dependence versus independence within the culture;
- an assessment of the institution's minority student enrollment including overall enrollment by minority group, retention rates by semester, graduation rates, transfer rates, academic performance by semester, and enrollments by curriculum/program;
- a plan that is integrated with the institution's broader educational objectives with an institution wide perspective on recruitment, and inclusion of social integration, academic performance and retention;
- specific measurable goals that can be evaluated including the determination of human and financial resources invested; and
- goals that are inclusive of all facets and constituencies of the institution and include bringing together the three principal constituencies: administrators, faculty, and counselors (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990).

Part II: Retention of Minority Students

Overview

As we look back at the 1990s, the dramatic changes in the demographics of postsecondary students are evident. Some of those are:

- the majority of college students are women;

- a new wave of immigrants are entering schools and colleges;
- adults students (over the age of 25) constitute a sizable portion of the student body;
- minority students are emerging as a student majority on some campuses;
- sizable numbers of first-generation students are enrolling college;
- many students with poverty level income are entering college; and
- nonracial student minorities such as students with disabilities, gay and lesbian students, and Jewish students are demanding colleges and universities to respond to their needs (Rendon, 1994).

Minority students often come to college with a large set of needs that result from a lack of adequate preparation in specific areas, financial pressures, lack of support, or advising about college and racism (Smith, 1989). These needs have challenged the traditional values, assumptions, and conventions that have been entrenched in the academy. Colleges and universities originally designed for the privileged have focused largely on learning outcomes, not on learning processes. Given this scenario it becomes clear why nontraditional students feel they do not fit in and feel so isolated and alienated in today's college culture. The needs and strengths of the new wave of students pose a difficult challenge to college faculty, counselors, and administrators. Old practices, techniques, and ideas that do not work for these students should change. Rendon (1994) supported the findings of Terenzini et al. (1993) that faculty should:

- be oriented to the needs and strengths of culturally diverse students;
- receive training to learn to validate students in and out of class; and

- foster a therapeutic learning community in and out of class by using strategies that foster the coexistence of student growth and development with academic development.

As an example of addressing the unique needs of minority students, the tribal college administrators in this study, have their goal to bring minority students to the campus and this is communicated by the college president's actions to the trustees, students, faculty and staff. Campus administrators concerned about equity issues must consider the complex factors including historical relationships with the minority populations served, opportunities and preparation of those students, and the institutional mission. Based on the unique set of needs at the institution, campus administrators should implement particular strategies for minority students (Richardson & Skinner, 1990).

Institutional Factors

Minorities cannot achieve full participation without access to institutions of higher education. Successful completion of a demanding, high-quality, undergraduate curriculum is the key to minority success (Mingle, 1987). College participation rates are an important barometer of the success of minorities in higher education (Carter & Wilson, 1992). Social class remains a dominant force in determining access and success in higher education. Minority students often show a high level of desire for a college education, but their desire is often in conflict with their culture. Other issues for many minority students in accessing higher education are whether the financial and academic programs as well as the general climate actually contribute to the success of minority and other disadvantaged students (Mingle, 1987).

In order to develop successful retention strategies, minority recruitment, and admissions should exist with a diverse curriculum in an open and tolerant campus (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990). In campus-wide efforts to retain students, all of these activities should be seen as interconnected with each other. For many minority students college life is their first independent experience in a predominately white environment. Even though there is much heterogeneity in our society, most minority students come to college from neighborhoods that are of their own ethnic background. For these students, college tends to be a culture shock. Without the deliberate efforts toward inclusion, students quickly become isolated. No matter how prestigious a college may be, without a critical mass of students like themselves, minority students feel isolated, alone, and uncomfortable. (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990). Those minority students who are most likely to acclimate to college are those who have noncognitive variables like:

- positive self-concept;
- realistic self-appraisal;
- mastery of their own problems;
- understanding of how to deal with racism;
- ability to defer gratification;
- have a strong support mentor; and
- have had some successful leadership experience (Bailey & Hafner, 1979; Beaty & Chiste, 1986).

In general minority students do not have much opportunity to see people of their own ethnic background in successful roles (role models) especially those students from

families where they are the first generation to attend college. Minority students also have difficulty in college settings when there are few faculty and staff of the same ethnic background. The existence of minority administrators, faculty members, and staff helps students develop a sense of belonging and identity. The existence of ethnic studies programs and ethnic centers on campus affirms a student's sense of belonging. Such programs also provide an opportunity for students to become part of an environment that supports the development of mentors, role models, and peer relationships (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990).

African American Students

Departure from postsecondary school among African American and Hispanic students, for the most part, like that of Caucasian students, reflects both issues of social contact/congruence and academic performance (Tinto, 1993). In 1950, over 90% of African American students were educated at traditionally black colleges. With the Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the financial assistance provided by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, and the Higher Education Amendments of 1968 African American students had access and began to attend predominately white postsecondary institutions. However, with this access, African Americans were expected to blend into the socio-cultural life on campus without any changes made by the academic structure or programs (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990).

In time the social pressures from other minority groups began to be felt in the higher education community. The public consciousness of the concept minority expanded to include Hispanics, American Indians, and Asians. The term minority was replaced

with the term racial and ethnic minority. Minority students began to be admitted representing the two ends of the educational spectrum. At one end, the best and the brightest minority students who met all the requirements for admissions began to gain access where before they would have been excluded. At the other end, economically and academically disadvantaged minority students were being accepted for special programs--such as state-funded educational opportunity programs--that had begun to support underprepared minority students. With the expansion of open enrollment and special programs on campuses came the need to address not only recruitment of minority students, but also retention, graduation, and placement (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990). Richardson et al. (1987) suggested that in order for minority students to feel comfortable, there needs to be 20-25% of that minority present on the campus. By 1990, 33% of 18 to 24-year old African American high school graduates were enrolled in college, up from 26% in 1985. The rate for Caucasian graduates increased five points to 39.4% during the same time period (Carter & Wilson, 1992).

The ability to meet the academic standards of the institution relates not only to academic skill, but also to positive academic self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, and familiarity with the academic requirements and demands of the institution. These noncognitive components of academic integration are more important to the persistence of African American students than they are to Caucasian students (Tinto, 1993).

Having the requisite skills for college is one thing, being able to apply them in a strange and perhaps unfriendly environment is another. Minority retention mirrors the academic climate as much as it mirrors academic ability (Tinto, 1993). No matter how subtle academic climates may be, those that discriminate and discourage minority

students enhance attrition rate for those students. Social involvement influences persistence; however, it may not mean the same to African American students as for Caucasian students. African American students are influenced more by formal associations such as serving on a university committee. Social involvement on a largely white campus may be difficult for students of color. When there are few options, students of color are more likely to experience a sense of isolation and inconguence with other students on campus, which experience may promote attrition. Even when social membership is found, if that support group is not seen as centrally involved in the institution, students of color develop a sense of marginality. For students of color therefore, especially those from disadvantaged African American background, departure appears not to differ so much in kind, but in degree. These students tend to face greater problems than do students generally in meeting academic demands of college work, in finding a suitable niche in the social and intellectual life of the college, and often in obtaining sufficient financial aid. (Tinto, 1993).

Administrators, faculty members, and staff at higher education institutions need to realize that changes in the institution to meet the needs of minority students should not be considered as a reduction in the intensity or rigor of academic programs. Rather, practices such as school and college collaboration in early outreach bridge programs, aggressive recruitment, targeted student financial aid, and academic support services are indispensable to attainment of equity goals. The importance in these programs, according to Richardson and Skinner (1991), may lie as much in the pressures they create for institutional adaptation as in the buffer they provide between diverse students and institutional practice.

Hispanic Students

Similar to the experience of African Americans, Hispanics made considerable progress during the 1970s in their overall college attendance rates. During the1980s unprecedented growth in the Hispanic population was recorded. In spite of this population growth, the high school graduation rate for such students remained low. However, even though Hispanics have not improved their high school graduation rates, students who do complete high school have helped to increase Hispanic enrollment in higher education. (Carter & Wilson, 1992). Recent data shows little change in this dramatic trend of Hispanic postsecondary students from the period between 1985 and 1990. Data collected by Carter and Wilson in 1992 shows that only 15.8% of all young Hispanics enrolled in college during 1990 compared to 25.4% for African Americans and 32.5 % for Caucasians. Four-year institutions showed the most growth of Hispanic students from 1988 to1990 with an increase of 16.2%.

From 1984 to 1994, the total number of Caucasian undergraduates in American colleges and universities increased by 5.1%. This growth compares to a 61% jump in the number of Asian, Hispanic, African American, and American Indian undergraduates during the same period of time. In 1984, nonwhite students, Asian, Hispanic, African American, and American Indian, made up 18.4% of the total national undergraduate population, while in 1994 they accounted for 25.7% (Carter & Wilson, 1992; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998).

Degree Attainment

Data was collected on four-year degree attainment rates by Astin et al. (1996) from 365 baccalaureate-granting institutions that participated in the Cooperative

Institutional Research Program's annual survey of entering freshmen in the fall for 1985. Data on six-year and nine-year degree attainment rates were obtained from student rosters sent to registrars during the 1994-1995 academic year. Results from this study showed Asian American students had by far the highest degree completion rate of 57.6%, followed by Caucasian students at 47.3%. African American at 33.9% and American Indians at 33.2% showed the lowest rates, although Puerto Rican-Americans (36.9%) and Mexican American/Chicanos (39.5%) were also relatively low. These findings are troubling especially since the latter four ethnic/minority groups are already substantially underrepresented among entering college freshmen. These statistics represent a major weakness in the educational pipeline for students from underrepresented ethnic/minority groups.

In all likelihood, the same factors contribute to the underrepresentation of these groups among entering college freshmen--i.e., poor academic preparation, poverty, and lack of education in the parental family. These factors also contribute to students' higher dropout rates during college (Astin, 1995). According to this study, the difference in the degree completion rates between Caucasians and members of underrepresented minority groups will be exaggerated if one looks only at the four-year rates. This is especially true for African Americans, whose nine-year rate of 33.9% is more than 75% higher than their four-year rate of only 19.4%. These figures also suggest that the same factors that contribute to low attendance and retention rates among underrepresented minorities also prolong the time it takes these students to complete a bachelor's degree. According to this study, nine-year bachelor degree attainment rates are the highest for every racial/minority group in private universities (72.0%).

Retention Factors

In order to increase the success rate of others in college, it is important to focus on those minority students who have been successful (Padilla,1998; Richardson et al., 1987). It is important to understand what accounts for students' success when they do complete a degree program so that students and institutions can better know what to do to help other students succeed. Padilla envisioned the campus experience for students as a "black box." Students entering the black box have varying characteristics and experiences, and they leave the black box with either a degree, or as a dropout, or as noncompleters of the program of study. What accounts for the difference is the students' ability to avoid and overcome the barriers to goal completion presented to them on their campus. Successful students develop expertise to overcome the barriers. By looking at these completers, the local barriers at a particular institution can be identified and strategies developed to overcome them.

Financial aid has played a major role in promoting access to higher education for all students, especially minority students. The most effective route of financial aid is to package loans with grants and work (St. John & Noell, 1989). Although financial aid is the least ambiguous variable in attending college, it is often the one which concerns students the most (Pottinger, 1990). However, students can be accomplices to their own failure in this arena. For example, when students do not meet financial aid deadlines, they loose their opportunity to receive financial aid. Pottinger (1990) found that well motivated students completed and received their financial aid on time. Perhaps the issue of inadequate financial resources is more an issue of motivation than of lack of available resources. Nevertheless, federal financial aid institutions should implement measures to

extend the term of financial aid eligibility for students who require more time to complete their degrees such as minority students, transfer students, and those whose academic progress is typically delayed by taking needed developmental level courses (Wright, 1991).

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

African American students who attend historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are more likely to complete their degrees when they are compared with African Americans of comparable academic preparation who attend non-HBCUs (Astin, 1996). Attending an HBCU appears to have a positive indirect influence on the academic self-concept of African American students, particularly African American women. Pascarella found that as a result of higher self-concept, African American students, especially the women, had significantly higher levels of academic integration and success at predominately African American institutions (Pascarella, et al., 1987). It appears there is nothing inherent in the environment of HBCUs that enhances degree completion other than their small size. This has proven to be more significant than selectivity in the case of HBCUs (Astin, 1996).

Part III: American Indian Student Retention

> The student then likened his college experience to a journey through a series of successive storms. He conjured up an image of those storms common at the higher elevations surrounding his home near the continental divide; the penetrating cold, the lightening and darkening clouds, the battering volume and force of the wind, and the driving rain turning to frigid sleet and snow. This imagery is consistent with the traditional Navajo world view that perceives life as

a walk through space and all natural phenomena, such as storms, as either allies or enemies on his journey (Witherspoon in Pottinger, 1990, p. 44).

Historical Perspective of Education

The Sioux medicine man and teacher, Lame Deer, emphasized that learning must come from within and that it is not something than can be forced on one from without. As such, American Indians tend to see learning-- education--as something highly personal. Things which are learned are learned because they are relevant and have meaning to the person learning them. Historically, Indian youth have been encouraged to learn what was relevant to them from a relative or others who were emotionally and psychologically close to them. The knowledge learned had relevance because it was of immediate importance. It was not something that had no immediate value, no immediate use, not understood, and would be used only years in the future (Bold Warrior, 1992, p. 9).

Many factors that affect the retention and attrition of other minority populations are the same factors as those that affect the American Indian population. However there are some historical events that uniquely affect the attitudes of American Indians in their education process.

The original idea behind Indian education was to civilize and assimilate American Indians into the mainstream of the dominant culture brought from Europe (Reyhner & Eder,1992). As far back as 1492, the restructuring and reeducation of American Indians by the secular and religious institutions of the colonizing nations such as Spain, Great Britain, France, and the United States tells the story of many stereotypical beliefs about the culture and capability of American Indians. It was easier to convince American

Indians to change in military run boarding schools than on the battle field (Reyhner & Eder, 1992).

There were four common tenets behind Indian education throughout the period of colonizing the New World (Lomawaima,1999). The first tenet was to civilize and assimilate the American Indians into the mainstream of the dominant culture brought from Europe. This meant American Indians were required to give up their old way of life totally and adopting domestic customs, such as dress, hairstyle and family structure as well as economic technologies, such as farming, trades, crafts, and foods. A Peace Commission established in 1867 by President Grant stated, "Through sameness of language is produced sameness of sentiment and thought; customs and habits are molded and assimilated in the same way, and thus in process of time the differences producing trouble would have been gradually obliterated....in the difference of language today lies two-thirds of our problem....."(Deloria, 1999; Reyhner & Eder, 1992).

The second tenet was that American Indians were required to give up their own spirituality and become Christians. Spiritual practices, ceremonies, and customs were not allowed. Disallowing these practices served to remove American Indians that much further from their language and customs and sense their of community.

The third tenet was to make Native communities politically and legally subordinate to the government by such actions as resettlement of American Indians onto reservations and the resettlement of American Indian children into mission, manual labor, residential, and boarding schools. Over a three-hundred year period white educators advocated boarding schools for American Indian students because they felt Indian families were a negative influence on their children's education. However, Indian parents

seldom agreed to have their children taken away. In addition to taking children away from their parents, other regulations were forced on Indian adults in order to suppress Indian culture (Deloria, 1999; Reyhner & Eder, 1992).

The fourth tenet was to enforce specific pedagogical methods that were deeply rooted in the European philosophy and practice. These included mass regimentation, authoritarian discipline, strict gender segregation, and emphasis on manual labor, avoidance of higher academic or professional training, rote memorization, and drill in desired physical and emotional habits. Presidentially appointed agents acted as dictators with authority to control all aspects of reservation life. Bans were placed on American Indian ceremonies, such as the Sun Dance, and all traditional religious ceremonies.

By 1838, the United States government was operating six manual training schools with eight hundred students and eighty-seven boarding schools with about 2,900 students (Lomawaima,1999; Reyhner & Eder, 1992). Schools set up on reservations were designed to devalue the traditional culture and religion of American Indian people and coercively to assimilate their youth into the dominant society. At the core of this instruction was teaching English to the children in an attempt to eliminate the native language and thereby eliminate with it the culture of American Indians. This forced settlement and education on reservations caused almost total dependence on the federal government for food, shelter, and clothing.

These acts on the part of early settlers toward American Indians in the New World are viewed today by American Indian scholars as acts of cultural genocide (WhiteShield, 2000). The after affects on a group of people who have been stripped so completely of their traditions, language, and culture has been called Historical Trauma Response

(HTR). The unique experiences that have lead American Indians to HTR explains a significant difference American Indians face in their response to education in general and higher education than do other minority groups. The spiritual and cultural death that was attempted by the development of the boarding schools, taking children away from their families and placing them into abusive institutions, from the 1880s to the 1950s is an example of the atrocities experienced by American Indians that has created negative feelings toward education for generations. Such cultural trauma as that inflicted on American Indians in this country since the 1500s seriously impacts the physical, emotional, mental and social well-being of individuals, families, and the entire culture. It caused a sense of oppression that American Indians face today that affects the retention of students in all school experiences, including the postsecondary experience(Deloria, 1999; Reyhner & Eder, 1992; WhiteShield, 2000).

Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is so important to American Indian students that is has been identified as a primary indicator of college success (Huffman, Sill, & Brokenleg in Browne & Evans, 1987). Most American Indian college students experience constant conflict, either consciously or unconsciously, between their value system and that of the educational system. Some researchers have described this conflict as "oppositional identity" which emerges in situations of minority/majority contact, such as a college environment (Ogbu in Pottinger, 1990). Primary cultural difference include cognitive, language, relational, and stylistic differences between cultures. Secondary differences arise from cultural contact, particularly between dominant and subordinate groups, and are a product of that contact. American Indian students who have completed years of

education are generally proficient in the primary attributes of the majority culture and are essentially bicultural. If these students have difficulty in their college experience, it is possible that they are experiencing "oppositional identity"--i.e. a significant cultural barrier of some type-- and must find a way to overcome this barrier to be successful (Ogbu in Pottinger, 1990). Minority students experience frustration when they are recruited by institutions on the strength of previous achievements and cultural affiliations and then expected to behave like Caucasian students with whom they have little in common (Richardson & Skinner, 1991). Colleges and universities should not ignore the opportunities for American Indian students to experience oppositional identity. They should, instead, appreciate and value the necessity of culture in the college experience of American Indian students and should provide support in transcending the cultural conflict to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills needed by American Indian students to function effectively in a multicultural environment (Brown & Evans, 1987; Swisher & Deyhle, 1987).

American Indian Retention

Like the other minority groups, American Indians and Alaskan Natives showed moderate growth in higher education enrollments from 1988-1990. American Indian and Alaskan Native enrollment in institutions of higher education jumped from 76,000 in 1976 to 127,000 in 1994, an increase of 67%. The overall enrollment of American Indians and Alaskan Natives increased 30%. The greatest increase among American Indians during that time period was for women, an increase of 98% (Pavel, et al., 1998).

The majority of American Indian students are enrolled in two-year colleges. Still, American Indians represent less than 1% of all students in higher education (Carter &

Wilson, 1992). Thirty percent of American Indian high school graduates in Minnesota became college freshman in 1996, compared with 21.8% of African American, 27.3% of Hispanics, and 33.7% Caucasian students (Fine, 1998).

While American Indian students are far less likely to earn a 2.00 or better GPA in college, those who do, continue their education in the same rate as the majority. However, it is interesting to note that West (1988) noted that there is a positive correlation between career maturity and academic performance (as indicated by GPA) for American Indian students. Academic achievement is the key to success. Whatever mix of skills and resources which must be acquired to meet academic standards, it can be argued, are also the skills and resources needed to overcome all other barriers in pursuing a degree (Pottinger, 1990).

Population Growth

The American Indian population experienced tremendous growth in the 20th century, increasing from 237,000 people in 1900 to 1.9 million in 1990. Despite this growth, American Indians composed only 0.8% of the total population in 1990. The American Indian community is comparatively younger than the overall population with 36% of American Indians compared with 26% of the total population being under the age of 18 (Pavel, et al., 1998). The vast majority of American Indians do not live on reservations but rather in urban areas. The greatest numbers of American Indians live in California, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Arizona. The median family income for all American Indians in 1990 was $21,750 compared to nationwide which was $35,225 (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990).

High School and College Enrollment/Performance

In 1990 among those 25 years and older, 66% of American Indians had completed high school, compared to 75% of the total U.S. population, 9% had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 20% of the total U.S. population, and 3% held graduate or professional degrees, compared to 7% of the total U. S. population (Pavel, et al., 1998). The dropout rate of American Indian students in high school was reported at 35.5%. In 1992 the dropout rate of American Indians was 56% and 46% of Alaskan Native (Cahape & Howley, 1992).

In 1994, 54% of American Indian undergraduates who were enrolled in Division II Institutions stayed in college after the first year compared with 68% of undergraduates nationwide. The American Indian persistence after three-years was 33% compared to 49% for all undergraduates. Between 1976-77 and 1993-94, the number of bachelor's degrees conferred increased by 86% for American Indians compared to 27% degree recipients overall. The number of master's degrees awarded to American Indians increased by 75% and the number of first-professional degrees increased by 89% compared to increases in of 22% and 18%, respectively, for all degree recipients. American Indians were awarded 134 doctoral degrees in 1993-94, an increase of 41% from the number awarded in 1976-77. Overall, doctoral degree attainment increased by 30% for the same time period (Pavel, et al., 1998).

According to the 1990 census, American Indians represented 3.1% of all dropouts in elementary through secondary school; however, they accounted for only 0.9% of all students in those grades. Eighty-five percent of American Indian students attended state-run schools. On standardized tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the

American College Testing Program (ACT), American Indian students' scores are improving slightly. However, given the current trends, even by the year 2000, American Indian students will still lag substantially behind the forecasted scores for all students (Cahape & Howley, 1992). In 1990, only 2% of college-bound American Indian high school graduates had a combined SAT score of 1,100 or better compared with 22% of all college-bound high school graduates. Twenty-four percent of American Indian college-bound high school graduates completed a college preparatory curriculum compared with 56% of all college-bound high school graduates (Pavel, et al., 1998). Only 5% of American Indian students had a GPA in high school of 3.5 or higher compared to a nationwide figure of 19% of all college-bound students. Participation in four-year institutions by American Indians remained at 0.5% over a ten-year period as reported in 1990 (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990). However, American Indian students who do remain in high school have equal performance to other students who stay (Eberhard, 1989).

Risk Factors

American Indian students have a variety of risk factors that cause them to dropout of college. They include: lack of money, inadequate preparation, alcohol/drug abuse, other health problems, lack of motivation, housing problems, loneliness/alienation at school, lack of support groups of friends or staff, lack of long range/career goals, lack of role models, jealously, sibling rivalry, unrealistic expectations of the college environment, unrealistic concept of rewards for educated Indians, lack of trust in the institution, unwillingness to change, and fear of not being able to return home after

graduation (Cahape & Howley, 1992; Guyette & Heth, 1984; Falk & Aitken, 1984; Pavel, et al., 1998).

Societal factors

Recent research has begun to uncover the many cultural barriers preventing American Indians from obtaining equal access to higher education. Reservation and non-reservation American Indian students have different needs. The amount of assimilation an individual has experienced relates to the adjustment issues they will have in college. These factors need to be realized. Independent of all other considerations, including the level of the student's academic ability, if the American Indian student is not integrated into the postsecondary environment, and remains an unassimilated "cultural Indian," the chance of academic success is reduced (Scott, 1986). Often this balancing of cultural values with the rules of white society has been referred to by American Indians as "learning to walk in both worlds" (Wenzlaf & Biewer, 1996). This metaphor implies that in order to survive and participate fully in the mainstream culture, American Indian students must learn an alien way to walk, talk, think, and act, behaving as themselves only when they are at home in the Indian world. This expectation places the burden of assimilation totally on the shoulders of the American Indian student and can be damaging to one's identity and spirituality. For many American Indians, personal and cultural identity, as well as spirituality, are inextricably intertwined with connections to family, tribe, and homeland. This intricate web of interrelationships and the sustaining power of the values with which individuals are raised pushes them forward into higher learning while at the same time pulls them back to their home community (Garrod & Larimore,

1997). The American Indian students needs to prepare for college, but colleges need to also prepare for American Indian students (James, 1992).

The extent to which state, local, national, and private organizations get involved in supporting the education of American Indians helps not only the individual but also the entire American Indian community, at all levels. Individuals who complete higher education and go back to work and live on their reservations and in American Indian communities become role models for others--they are examples of what others can do. By their example they foster the self-esteem of others. They become a support to the society. According to Tijerina and Biemer (1987-88) in Davis, tribal colleges are a good example of what can happen when the American Indian community works with state, local, and federal organizations to create legislation that provides specific educational environments that can better address the societal needs of American Indian students in higher education.

Fallow (1987) found cultural adjustment to be a significant variable in persistence. American Indian students operate in two distinct cultures in the college environment: that of the American Indian, rich in heritage, customs, mores and values, and that of the majority culture, which has some conflicting mores and values and customs which results in culture shock. How well they are able to navigate within these two worlds is a factor in persistence.

Institutional factors

The environment an institution provides for minority participation and achievement can be viewed as the observable product of an invisible culture. Analysis of outcomes related to minority participation and graduation yields clues to the nature of an

institution's culture. To meet participation and graduation goals for American Indians and other minority groups, institutions must adapt their environments to accommodate greater diversity without relinquishing their commitment to high standards of achievement for all students (Richardson & Skinner, 1991).

Administration

Institutional commitment beginning with top level administrators and including all staff and programs is important at colleges and universities that serve American Indian students (Davis, 1994; Falk & Aitken, 1984). Sometimes it is a single top administrator whose commitment makes the institutional environment appealing to American Indian students (Cahape & Howley, 1992). Without some intervention of university administrators, faculty, and staff in mentoring and hiring practices, higher education employees could continue to work from a framework where they favor the assimilated American Indian student over the more traditional American Indian student because the behaviors of the former are more familiar than the latter (Steward, 1993). Administrators manage culture by using the same tools they employ to address other priorities: strategic planning, coordination and control, staff hiring practices, and faculty incentives and support (Richardson & Skinner, 1991). An example of such administrative institutional commitment to American Indians would be providing budgeting services/funds for students' personal crises that arise (Cahape & Howley, 1992). Research for the past twenty years has indicated the importance of American Indian faculty in colleges as a retention tool, but to date they remain few and far between (Davis, 1994; Guyette & Heth, 1984). One of the possible explanations for so few American Indians in the ranks of faculty is that historically the occupation was seen as more of a detriment from the

perspective of the American Indian community than from the academic community (Guyette & Heth, 1984).

Classrooms

According to Van Hamme (1996) often American Indian students have the perception that classroom experiences are irrelevant to their culture and their future lives and therefore these students are much more likely to have poor academic records and leave school. It is crucially important, then that a culturally relevant curriculum be provided to American Indian students. Curriculum should be defined as growth experiences that lead to continuous reconceptualization of culture, individuals, and groups (Bold Warrior, 1992).

Curriculum

While developing an inclusive curriculum is important to the success of American Indian students, it is difficult to do because most faculty do not have the background, training, or readily available accurate resources to use (Almeida, 1996). Jorgensen (1993) found change that included a more multiculturally balanced environment must occur in higher education if American Indian students are to succeed in greater numbers. Jorgensen contends that unless this is done, institutions will continue to reproduce an unequal balance of power resulting in a sense of marginality and alienation for American Indian students. Cultural awareness and training with faculty, staff, and administrators can help diminish this possibility (Indian Nations At Risk Task Force, 1991; Osborne & Cranney, 1985; Steward, 1993).

Caring teachers who take the time to learn from American Indian students and develop a sense of cultural appreciation promote retention (Cahape & Howley, 1992).

Wilson (1996) supports the importance of relationships with faculty. Accessibility, approachability, availability, genuineness, and caring were factors most important in relationships with faculty of the American Indian students interviewed in Wilson's study (1996). Involving American Indian students in designing examples of alternative cooperative learning strategies would build awareness and include students in the process. The experience many American Indian students have brought to college from high school is one in which they often dropped out of school because they were bored and tired of being told to read the textbook and answer the questions at the end of the chapter. They perceive their teachers as uncaring and more interested in the subject matter than the students (Reyhner, 1993). Hiring American Indians as work-study students and in full-time professional, support, and classified staff positions helps develop the opportunity for students to have positive cultural role models. Developing these types of strategies to promote institutional diversity can address negative stereotypes about American Indians (Jorgensen, 1993).

Support system

A support system is one of the most crucial elements needed for American Indian students; however, minority students in general feel they have less support on campus than majority students(Indian Nations At Risk Task Force, 1991; Padilla, et al., 1997; Pavel & Padilla, 1993; Tate & Schwartz, 1993). Those who succeed in spite of the lack of support do so because they create for themselves the personal and environmental supports that are lacking institutionally in order to confront the challenges of college effectively. The expertise model of student success developed by Padilla focuses on those activities and resources that minority students create for themselves to be successful

(Padilla, et al., 1997). Brown (1995) found a significant difference between American Indian persisters and nonpersisters when it comes to their interaction with faculty and staff. Persisters are more likely to attempt to meet professors outside of class, to seek out a faculty or staff person they could identify with, and to use faculty departments for advisement (adjustment issues, personal problems, direction for tutoring needs) than are nonpersisters.

Admissions standards

As admissions standards continue to be raised at many postsecondary institutions, American Indian students who graduate from high schools at which they were not adequately prepared for college, cannot meet these higher admissions standards (Davis, 1992; Falk & Aitken, 1984). In general, American Indian students reported that the academic preparation at reservation schools they received, especially in math and science, did not prepare them to be successful in college (Fallows, 1987). These reports are confirmed by national standardized examinations of college readiness such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (Astin, 1996). Fallow (1987) found that academic factors appear to have as major an influence in the persistence rate of American Indian students in college as do personal issues. Factors related to personal problems--largely financial and motivational issues--had a major impact on American Indian college persistence/withdrawal.

Pottinger in Davis (1992) stated that variations in the quality of previous education were widely held by faculty and administrators to be an important factor in understanding minority student attrition. Faculty training on cultural awareness, academic strategies, as well as appropriate support services, should be in place to support

under-prepared students so that American Indian students are better able to address the rigors of college coursework. American Indian students who perceived that their instructors had a positive attitude toward American Indian heritage were more successful persisters. As these students entered postsecondary schools where cutbacks can be common in the remedial or developmental courses, no resources were available for remediation. Davis (1995) found that strong academic preparation allowed American Indian students to build upon previous positive self-efficacy and confidence. Davis (1995) also found that academic performance was a significant variable in American Indian students who persisted, and that the closer students came to graduation, the higher the grade point average became for persisters. Another factor in persistence is that American Indian students who enter college at an older age tend to persist and graduate.

Social integration

Another essential element for the institution to address proactively is the importance of the social integration process. Whether a student self-selects to participate or not, ethnicity can limit access to both campus-life activities and the majority culture. Given the important function of ethnicity for individual students, it is difficult to leave one's culture "outside the campus" (Murguia et al, 1991). For this reason, it is important for institutions to provide opportunities for American Indians to meet as a group on campus through specially designed activities, ceremonies, events, or a specific student center dedicated to American Indians. Orientation programs are another effective measure for American Indian students to develop social as well as academic integration into the institution. These programs introduce students to the campus, labs, special

support, and academic advisement as well as to the American Indian cultural center (Osborne & Cranney, 1985; Scott, 1986).

Family Factors

The literature on the importance of family to the American Indian student states that family support has bridged the road to success more than any other contributing factor (Wenzlaf & Biewer, 1996). The traditional American Indian family unit is the extended family. Each person has an abundance of blood and clan relatives to share the responsibilities of child-rearing. Elders hand down tribal legends, history, and tradition and are treated with tremendous respect. Within this extended family structure is a belief in the sacredness of all creation and caring for all of nature. Recognizing the connection with others, emphasis is placed on sharing material possessions. Being a good person is more important than acquire material goods. Natural cooperation among group members takes precedence over competition. Harmony within the group is all important. Balance and harmony are maintained by not possessing an individual's rights or beliefs. Being quiet and still in not uncomfortable to American Indians, they are comfortable with silence. Time is viewed as flowing and always a part of the individual (HeavyRunner & Morris, 1997).

Lin (1990) found that the most important relationship between American Indian family value-orientation and other family characteristics is finding that the more educated the parents, particularly the female parents, the more modern the families. The more modern the families, the more support and encouragement families provide for education. In terms of general behavioral patterns, there is a positive correlation between traditional family background with task and achievement orientation. Those students from

traditional American Indian families tend to be more task and achievement oriented, to perceive themselves as self-starters, to be more willing to learn from others than do those from modern families. The more traditional the family background, the higher the GPAs and the more time students spent doing homework. Students from traditional families are also more likely to feel their education create conflicts in the family. Those students from modern families, however, are more trusting of other people than were those from traditional families. Students from modern families are taught to be more people oriented for example, to understand the importance of the effects of human relations between professor and student. These modern family students also skip class more often.

In spite of the fact that students from traditional families do not have the support and encouragement from their families to attend college, they out-perform their modern classmates. This emphasizes the importance of the value of orientation toward tasks, achievement, and hard work. Lin's (1990) findings show that once internalized, the orientation toward task and achievement becomes an independent factor that is so powerful it can overcome and transcend external limitations.

Regardless of whether an American Indian student entering college comes from a traditional or modern family, or from an assimilated or traditional environment, family support is crucial to the success of the student early in the high school experience and throughout the college experience (Pavel & Padilla, 1993). One study at the University of North Dakota reveled that American Indian students who do not have family support either relocate their families to be close to them or withdraw from the college program altogether (Wenzlaf & Biewer, 1996). In their study, Wenzlaf and Biewer (1996) found that many students experience this inner conflict between not wanting to leave families

and communities to go to college for fear of offending parents by rejecting traditional ways, yet not wanting to lose the opportunities that come with a college education.

Individual Factors

American Indian students entering postsecondary institutions carry with them a cultural core which, if they are to be successful, is essential for them to incorporate into their college experience. It is also essential that faculty, staff, and administrators understand these cross-cultural issues. Taken as a whole, these cultural values and beliefs are a student's cultural foundation. If theses values and beliefs are respected by administrators, faculty, and staff, it enhances the relationships, resilience and meaningful opportunities for American Indian students (HeavyRunner & Morris, 1997). As presented in American Indian Rehabilitation Programs: Unmet Needs (1996), some of the essential values and beliefs that American Indians bring to the institution are:

- priority is with people and relationships over material goods;
- absence of direct eye contact which signifies respect not disinterest or shyness;
- importance of silence as a sign of respect rather than a sign of shyness, lack of interest, or inability to communicate;
- importance of small talk before getting down to business;
- perspective of time which accepts that things happen when they are meant to happen but does not impede punctual behavior in the school or work world;
- poverty that impedes all aspects of life and depletes time and energy that could otherwise be directed toward studying --i.e. lack of transportation, child care, health care, funding to purchase needed textbooks and supplies; and,

- importance of immediate and extended family and tribal group (Falk & Aitken, 1984; Deever, et al., 1974).

In spite of the fact that there are 554 federally recognized tribes in the U.S. with many tribal differences, there are shared core values, beliefs, and behaviors. Ten of those are: spirituality, child-rearing/extended family, veneration of age/wisdom/tradition, respect for nature, generosity and sharing, cooperation/group harmony, autonomy/respect for others, composure/patience, relativity of time, and nonverbal communication (HeavyRunner & Morris, 1997).

Spirituality

The spiritual aspect of the American Indian culture is significant. Spirituality is one of the four essential dimensions of the American Indian's world-view philosophy, often reflected in the medicine wheel. The other three dimensions are mental, emotional, and physical aspects. All four must be in balance for resilience to occur. Spirituality is a fundamental continuous part of the life of an American Indian. Embodied in American Indian spirituality is the concept of interconnectedness. The spiritual nature of all living things is respected and recognized. This spirituality is at the core of the American Indian's survival (HeavyRunner & Morris, 1997). Many spiritual values are held in common by Indian peoples. Many of these same values are present within the majority culture, but are not emphasized as they are within Indian culture. The American Indian culture is rich with ways to teach these dimensions. Some of these ways include traditional language, dance, ceremonies, blood/clan systems, music, art, medicine, foods, and clothing. When an emphasis is placed on the dimensions and values which constitute the value systems of American Indians, resilience and retention is much more likely to be

achieved (HeavyRunner & Morris, 1997; Indian Nations At Risk Task Force, 1991) Being Indian does not just mean being part of an ethnic group--being Indian is a way of life (Castillo, 1982).

Balance

All people need a balance of support and challenge in their lives. In higher education students look for a sense of well-being and security as they encounter new situations, people, and ideas that cause them to view the world and themselves differently. For many majority students, institutions of higher education provide a healthy balance between this support and challenge. For majority students, there is often greater cultural continuity between home and college which provides a sense of belonging and security. Similar social and institutional support may be lacking for minority students in their adjustment to the higher education environment (Padilla, et al., 1997).

American Indians are a classic example of those in need of this balance but who do not find it in typical ways, if at all. American Indians are less likely than other nonmajority students to seek counseling support if there are no counselors of a culturally similar background or at least no counselors who are culturally sensitive to the American Indian culture (Atkinson et al., 1990; Cahape & Howley, 1992). American Indian students rely heavily on significant others, mainly friends and members of the nuclear family to resolve problems. They may talk to college counselors, particularly non-Indian counselors, about problems related to school and their future, but more personal problems, even those are affecting schooling, are typically shared with culturally significant others (Bransford, 1982).

Huffman, Sill and Brokenleg (1986) found there are fundamental differences that affect college achievement of Sioux and Caucasian students. For Caucasian high school students, GPA and parental encouragement to attend college are related to higher achievement levels. These findings may indicate that the factors leading to academic success reside in students' preparation activities for college. For Sioux students, success seem to be related to cultural identity, that is, their ability to retain their traditional cultural identity and heritage.

Melchior-Walsh (1994) found in her study that socio-cultural alienation of American Indian students in predominately white universities in Canada and the U.S. potentially cause psychological, social, and academic maladjustment, often leading to drop-out behavior. She found that American Indian students often had feelings of isolation, lack of concentration, and being torn between achieving in an alienating university environment and nonachievement in a familiar home environment. In social interactions students felt they were supposed to represent all Indians or had to prove themselves because they were Indian, or were ignored because they were Indian. Support was given to students who did it "our way" and resentment was evident if Indian students did it "their way." American Indian students who tended to see their heritage as an advantage to themselves had a good self-concept and persisted to graduation.

Part IV: The Two-year College Experience

Overview

Fifty-four percent of all first-time, full-time college students in the U. S. start their academic careers in two-year community colleges (Hankin, 1996). The community college has become the educational melting pot for our society through its open

admissions policy, which enables individuals, who otherwise would not have access to higher education because of their academic background, to attend community two-year colleges. New immigrants, first-generation students, and adults returning to college after an absence from education for a number of years attend community colleges as a safe haven in which to begin their education. Because community two-year colleges are generally centrally located students can live at home while attending school (Grubb,Worthen, Byrd, Webb, Badway, Case, Gollo, & Curry-Villeneuve, 1999; Seidman, 1995).

Two-year colleges have always exemplified the ideal of lifelong learning and flexible enrollment. Two-year colleges have often been called "second-chance" institutions, providing a second crack at higher education for students whose motivation and performance in earlier schooling are inadequate to gain them admission to four-year schools to older students to those deciding to take a different direction in their lives to women after divorce or after children have grown to displaced workers (Grubb, et al., 1999).

Students who attend two-year colleges are ethnically, culturally, and economically diverse. The diversity has come rapidly to two-year colleges. Many international students, immigrants, and many undocumented aliens have contributed to this diversity. Immigrants view the two-year college as the ideal starting point in a new country for learning English, redeveloping or updating skills, or for developing technical skills to achieve employment in the U.S., skills that they were unable to acquire prior to immigration. Two-year colleges and the services provided to all students with differing

academic, social, and economic backgrounds can have a positive impact and lasting effect on the nation's future (Seidman, 1995).

History

The growth of two-year colleges in the U. S. was steady through the 1940s and 1950s with the major changes coming in their curricula as the colleges continued to add occupational education programs and emphasized the importance of guidance and counseling as a part of student services. In 1968 there were 739 public two-year colleges and by 1978 there were 1,047 such institutions, an increase of about 42%. It was within this era that tribally controlled two-year colleges first appeared (Stein, 1992). In the fall of 1990, 22.5% of minority students were enrolled in two-year public colleges versus 17.3% enrolled in public four-year colleges. Twenty-seven percent of minority students were enrolled at private two-year colleges versus 15.4% enrolled at private four-year colleges (Seidman, 1995).

The expansion of two-year colleges has been seen as a way of addressing the needs of nontraditional students without compromising the standards of four-year institutions (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990). Two-year community colleges serve the specific needs of their sponsorship areas. They are responsive to changing needs of businesses and industries. They have critical linkages between colleges and local services (Seidman, 1995).

The dramatic increase in the student body diversity in American postsecondary education has paralleled the growth in the importance of the two-year colleges. Minority students have heavily concentrated in two-year colleges (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990). Davis (1995) found that a greater number of American Indians who completed a

four-year degree attended two-year colleges before entering the four-year institutions. More American Indian students attended two-year colleges than four-year institutions from 1978 through 1994, while the majority of the general population was enrolled in four-year institutions. During the 1992-93 academic year, 51% of American Indians attending colleges were enrolled in associate's degree programs. Between 1976-77 and 1993-94 the number of associates degrees increased by 95% for American Indians as compared with 31% of the total population (Pavel, et al., 1998).

Growth

The existing body of evidence on the impact of community colleges is merely a beginning. The nature of two-year colleges and the characteristics and enrollment patterns of students they serve make it difficult to study the impact of two-year colleges. Between 1978 and 1991, enrollment in the two-year colleges rose 31% versus 23% for four-year institutions, and two-year college enrollments are expected to increase another 11% by 2003. Currently, two-year postsecondary institutions constitute about 28% of all U.S. colleges and universities and enroll about 37% of all students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998). Clearly, two-year colleges are having a dramatic affect on postsecondary institutions, but for the most part little is written about the impact of two-year colleges on students. The evidence that is available indicates that students aspiring to a bachelor's degree are approximately 15% less likely to obtain the degree if they begin their postsecondary education in a two-year college rather than a four-year institution. However, any relative disadvantages in bachelor's degree attainment does not necessarily transfer into long-term labor market disadvantages. Those two-year college students who do successfully transfer to four-year colleges and complete their bachelor's degree

achieve overall parity with similar four-year college students in such areas as job prestige, stability of employment, job satisfaction, and earnings (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998). When student background characteristics and other confusing influences are controlled, students initially attending community colleges and later transferring to four-year schools do not necessarily accrue penalties in terms of occupational or cognitive benefits of postsecondary education. When one considers the lower cost of tuition, the two-year community college may represent a cost-effective vehicle for acquiring the first two years of college study without sacrificing job-market competitiveness (Pascarella, et al., 1995-96)

Student Population

The degree completion six years after high school among students who entered higher education in 1986 indicated that of the 61.4% of Hispanic students going to college, 35.0% received degrees; 24.0% of those degrees were associate of arts (AA) degrees or less from two-year colleges. During that same time period 68.3% of African American students were going to college. Thirty percent received degrees; of those 15.3% were AA degrees or less from two-year colleges. These figures compare with 71.4 % of Caucasian students of whom 46.7% received degrees with 17.6% of those being AA degrees or less from two-year college (Tinto, 1993).

Characteristics of Two-year Colleges

In the two-year college environment, institutional involvement seems related more to academic integration than social integration. In a study done by Blustein, et al. (1986) predictors of academic performance of community college students indicated those students involved in the academic aspects of their lives, who had contacts with

faculty, and who sought support services tended to demonstrate more efficacy in their academic skills than those without these contacts and services. These involved students also tended to report a close relationship with a faculty or staff person, who acted as a mentor to them. The students felt more confident in themselves to switch career directions more often than did students those having academic difficulty (Blustein, Judd, Krom, Viniar, Padilla, Wedmeyer, & Williams,1986; Hankin, 1996).

Tinto and Russo's study (1995) suggests that collaborative learning works in the community college setting because it provides students with the supportive network of peers whose help eases the transition into college. This is especially true in a community college environment which is almost always a commuter setting. Collaborative learning help students bridge the academic-social divide that typically marks college life. Students found they could attend to both social and academic needs within the collaborative learning environment in the community college.

Challenges for Two-year Colleges

An ongoing challenge facing two-year colleges today is the way in which they are judged to be effective. If effectiveness is considered to be goal completion regardless of graduation, and this is consistent with the mission of the institution, then federal, state, and local governments as well as colleges need to reevaluate their definition of college effectiveness for the two-year colleges (Seidman, 1992). Colleges tend to treat as nonpersisters those students who do not re-enroll at the same campus for the following term. This does not take into account the variety of purposes for which individuals attend two-year colleges. For example, the results of a study done by the Office of Institutional Research at Westchester Community College indicated that 55.7% of the students were

attending the school primarily to receive the general education requirements and then transfer to a four-year college. Eighteen percent said they were attending to improve their job skills, 12% for personal interest, and 8.6% to prepare for a career change. There is a tremendous need to move away from the traditionally accepted notion that students attend colleges to receive degrees and move toward the idea that individuals attend colleges for both academic and personal reasons. With this new awareness, the impact on resource allocations to higher education could be enormous (Pezzullo, 1978; Seidman, 1995; Willett, 1983).

Part V: Tribal College Experience

Overview

Without question the most significant development in the American Indian community since World War II has been the development of tribally controlled colleges (Boyer, 1997). Tribal colleges are one of the most effective ways to serve American Indian education needs (Hill, 1995). Tribally controlled colleges represent a growing phenomenon in American higher education, one in which American Indians are chartering and developing their own institutions of higher education. At each tribal college location a small group of individuals has taken part in that college's establishment and development which in many cases was not recorded or shared with the tribal community or the higher education community. Tribally controlled community colleges would not exist without the support of tribal councils and tribal communities. According to Boyer (1997) it is the philosophy and curricula which make tribally controlled colleges unique in U.S higher education. Tribal colleges do not attempt to exist in isolation from American society. Instead they sit as the fulcrum between the Indian and non-Indian

world, making the western model of higher education accessible and useful the American Indian community (Boyer, 1997). Each college has a mission statement adhering to its American Indian--i.e., tribal--roots. Tribally controlled colleges represent 0.07% of the 3,000 institutions in higher education in the U.S. yet enrolled 10% of the American Indian population in 1978 (Stein, 1992). Tribal colleges programs are primarily two-years in length, but many one-year programs also exist. Several others offer the first two years of baccalaureate programs in conjunction with four-year institutions (Hill, 1995).

History of Tribal Colleges

In 1968 the Navajo Nation became the first tribe to establish its own college by granting a charter to Navajo Community College. The philosophy statement drafted for by the Navajo Nation tribal council in 1968 contained the following principles which sum up the essence of the necessity of tribally controlled colleges:

- for any community or society to grow and prosper, it must have its own means for educating its citizens which must be directed and controlled by the society it is intended to serve;
- if a community or society is to continue to grow and prosper, each member of the society must be provided with the opportunity to acquire a positive self-image and a clear sense of identity. This can be achieved only when each individual's capacities are developed and used to the fullest possible extent;
- it is absolutely necessary for every individual to understand and respect his culture and heritage, and he must have faith in the future of his society;

- members of different cultures must develop their abilities to operate effectively, not only in their own immediate societies, but also in the complexities of varied cultures that make up the larger society of man;
- in light of the difficulties experienced by traditional educational programs in meeting the needs of individuals and societies, it is important for Navajo Community College to search out and test new approaches in dealing with old problems;
- it is also important to build the capacity of the college so that it can respond effectively to problems arising out of rapidly changing conditions; and,
- to assure maximum development and success of individual students, Navajo Community College accepts the responsibility for providing individual programs and the fullest possible support to students to assist them in working out problems of adjustment (NCC Catalog in Stein, 1992).

In 1971, the Oglala Sioux Tribe and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe chartered tribal colleges. These first three colleges each possessed a distinct tribal and institutional identity but shared several commonalities. Each was established by a charter granted by a tribal council, and each college had its own American Indian governing board (Cahape & Howley, 1992). Since the beginning of the tribal college movement in 1968, the college enrollment American Indian students has increased. By1994, about 8% of all American Indians and Alaskan Natives attended tribal colleges. Twenty-three of the 25 tribal colleges reporting enrollment data in 1994 had the majority of their student bodies composed of American Indians (Pavel, et al., 1998).

By 1972, political necessities gave birth to the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). Leaders of the tribally controlled community colleges recognized

that unity among the small number of tribally controlled colleges was imperative in promoting tribal colleges as a viable option for American Indians in higher education and in stifling those who would use tribal differences to create havoc within this unique movement. AIHEC found that the tribal colleges had five unique traits in common:

- located on or near Indian reservations which were isolated geographically and culturally;
- had Indian boards of regents or directors and a majority of their administrators and faculty were Indian;
- had student bodies that were small, ranging in number from 75 to 800;
- suffered from chronic underfinancing and funding unpredictability; and
- student bodies and the Indian communities surrounding the colleges were from the lowest income areas in the U. S. (Oppelt, 1990; Stein, 1992).

Based on the efforts of AIHEC, the Tribally Controlled Colleges Assistance Act was signed into law by President Jimmy Carter in 1978 (Public Law 95-471), allocated fiscal funding to tribally controlled colleges. However, tribally controlled colleges lack a base to support the full cost of the education provided, and the limited federal support American Indian students receive fails to keep pace with enrollment growth. Since the founding of the American Indian College Fund (AICF) in 1989, private donations and foundation grants have allowed the colleges to build an endowment and distribute scholarship money to students. Today the future seems more secure, but the colleges remain chronically underfunded and unrecognized, operating with fewer dollars per student than most other colleges and universities in the U.S. Some tribal colleges also support their institutions through federal grants that fund vocational education. Tribal

colleges were recently designated as land grant colleges, and as such are entitled to and are provided both direct and annual payments from an endowment and opportunity to take part in a wide range of programs in the Department of Agriculture. Twenty-nine tribal colleges have received land-grant status (Boyer, 1997; Bigart, 1997; Congress of the United States, 1993; General Accounting Office, 1995; National Association of Land Grant Colleges, 1995).

Tribal colleges are crucial to the future of American Indians because they:

- establish a learning environment that supports students who have come to view failure as the norm;
- celebrate and help sustain American Indian traditions;
- provide essential services that enrich surrounding communities; and they
- have become centers for research and scholarship (Boyer, 1997).

Tribal College Characteristics

Tribal colleges began with the immediate goals of providing vocational training. This is still the case today; however, the range of degrees has expanded greatly, and the opportunity for transfer to four-year institutions for completing of a bachelor's degree is growing in popularity.

Most tribal college faculty are non-Indian. Although administration would like to have more American Indian instructors, they have a hard time finding applicants. One way of doing this is to follow a tribal/Indian preference policy in order to open more opportunities for American Indians to become faculty members. Also, salaries must be adequate to keep American Indian faculty. In addition, mentoring bright American Indian colleges students to become faculty members will enable tribal colleges to meet

their goals of human resource development and the incorporation of culture into the curriculum (Cross & Shortman, 1995).

Key to the mission of tribal colleges is curricula in American Indian culture, history, and sovereignty. Curricula on language, arts, music, and crafts are essential to ensure that the traditional knowledge and language will survive. Tribal history, law, politics, and social issues are other dimensions of the tribal college curricula. The day-to-day practices in tribal colleges reflect the social patterns of American Indian rather than mainstream society (Belgarde, 1994). But beyond the curricula, culture is "felt" throughout tribal colleges because culture shapes the institution and philosophy of education (Boyer, 1997; Oppelt, 1990; Stein, 1992).

Tribal college faculty, staff, and administration participate in their communities on many levels. Internet access and library services are provided for tribal communities. The tribal college site serves as a location for meetings, gatherings and powwows. Decision making processes in tribal colleges are open to community observation which helps to enhance the colleges credibility to the American Indian community (Cahape & Howley, 1992).

Tribal college administrators, faculty, and staff maintain close contact with students and their entire families and communities. Strong components of the mission of tribal colleges are the efforts made to include the extended family and American Indian community in the educational process (Cahape & Howley, 1992).

For decades, educators understood that for many American Indian students the transition to college was an especially disorienting experience. Even when students arrived academically prepared and financially secure, success at mainstream institutions

was not guaranteed. Separated from home, they were confronted with unfamiliar values and expectations. Those who persisted talked about the inferiority and isolation they felt. In contrast, tribal colleges have eliminated this discontinuity between college and community (Boyer, 1997).

Student Characteristics

Nontraditional students are the norm at tribal colleges, with women predominating the student population. Most of these institutions have two-thirds to three-fourths female students who are often unemployed single heads of household. The median age of all students is 29 to 30 years old. Large numbers have GEDs rather than high school diplomas. About 98% of the students qualify for need-based federal financial aid. Many students must drive 120 miles or more a day to get to and from classes (Boyer, 1997; Cahape & Howley, 1992). However, one of the most appealing elements of tribal colleges is that they are usually close to home. This provides a comfort level for students. They are with others who are like them. The proximity to home also helps to combat homesickness (Indian Nations At Risk Task Force, 1991).

Performance of Tribal Colleges

While data on retention and graduation are still missing, there is growing evidence that persistence in tribal colleges is rewarded. Vocational degrees and certificates tend to have higher completion rates since they often lead directly to employment. Because many tribal college students have been away from formal education for an extended period prior to enrollment, they often proceed at slower pace than students at other colleges and this pace is often more easily accommodated in the tribal college setting(Cahape & Howley, 1992).

Recent surveys of tribal college graduates consistently find that most are employed or continuing their education. Their success is more striking when compared to the poverty and unemployment that exists on most reservations. In a comprehensive study done by Carty Monette (in Boyer, 1997), of five hundred graduates at Turtle Mountain Tribal College from 1980 to 1990, most were working or continuing their education. Less than 13% reported they were unemployed. Fifty-six percent of graduates had continued their education at a non-Indian college or university, and among this group 32% had earned a four-year degree. These figures exceed the transfer and graduation rates of community college students nationwide. More impressive is the fact that most graduates stay on their reservations and are able to share their knowledge and new skills with the whole community and to serve as role models (Boyer, 1997).

Tribal colleges are small, which provides an intimate and supportive atmosphere for students. Often the facilities are very hodgepodge, such as rented store fronts, trailers, and leftover buildings. Classrooms and office space are usually severely restricted. The extras, like a student lounge, dining facility, and a gym are usually nonexistent (Boyer, 1997).

A study of the tribal colleges between 1983-1989 reported 1,575 graduates. These graduates have been successful in finding employment. Eighty-three to 88% were employed in geographic areas that typically experience unemployment rates between 54% to 85%. The education attained at tribal colleges has helped women get off federal assistance and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (Cahape & Howley, 1992). Tribal colleges have been a reasonable, appropriate, and successful approach to addressing both the cultural and postsecondary educational needs of American Indians.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study has been thoroughly grounded in the literature review (Table 1: Factors Associated with Student Completers and Noncompleters).There are five main factors related to completion and noncompletion of students in postsecondary education: societal, organizational, institutional, family, and individual. In this literature review key societal factors related to completion and noncompletion are the low high school and college persistence and graduation rates of minorities (Astone & Nunez-Wormack ,1990; Cahape & Howley , 1992; Carter & Wilson ,1992; Eberhard, 1989; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998; Pavel, et al., 1998; Tinto, 1993; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990). Studies relate these low rates to the issue of socio-alienation for American Indians on predominately white campuses (Melchior-Walsh, 1994). Part of the issue for American Indians is the need to learn to "walk in two worlds" to integrate into the college environment in order to be successful (Fallows, 1987; Garrod & Larimore, 1997; James, 1992; Scott, 1986; Wenzlaf & Biewer, 1996). However there is a trend that student bodies will be changing dramatically over the next 10 to 20 years to become more heterogeneous (Carter & Wilson, 1992; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998; Tinto, 1993). Also, tribal colleges are creating a successful bridge of success in the postsecondary arena for American Indian students (Tijerina & Biemer,1987-88).

There are a number of institutional factors that support or hinder students in the completion of educational programs. Initially the programs and policies that drive recruitment, preenrollment, admissions, counseling, enrollment, and integration into college, and sensitivity of diverse students/minority are essential in the retention process

(Alfred, 1983; Cabrera, et. al, 1992; Creamer, 1980; Davis, 1995; Falk & Aitken, 1984; Fallows, 1987; Fidler, 1991; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Terenzini , 1986; Seidman, 1992; Seidman, 1989; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1984; Witt & Handal ,1984). Padilla (1998) envisions the campus as a "black box" and what happens during that experience can lead to activities support students and which ones do not. Retention programs must actively recruit minority students (Eaton & Bean, 1995; Farbaugh-Dorkins, 1991). In close competition with these programs is the importance of the first-year experience and the affect this experience has on retention (Astin et al.,1996; Tinto, 1993).

Each institution must study its campus environment for what works in retention (Hossler, 1984). Additionally it is very important to consider the advantages of each type of postsecondary institution such as community colleges, tribal colleges, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), vocational schools, and four-year institutions (Astin , 1996; Astin et al., 1996; Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990; Bigart, 1997; Blustein, et al., 1986; Boyer, 1997, Cahape & Howley, 1992; Congress of the United States, 1993; Cross & Shortman, 1995; General Accounting Office, 1995; Grubb, et al., 1999; Hankin, 1996; Hill , 1995; Indian Nations At Risk Task Force, 1991; National Association of Land Grant Colleges, 1995; Oppelt, 1990; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1995-96; Pascarella, et al., 1987; Seidman , 1995; Stein , 1992; Tinto, 1993).

Another important factor in the retention of students in institutions is the relationship and involvement of faculty with students (Bean, 1982; Bean & Vesper, 1994; Dehyle, 1992; Endo & Harpel, 1982; Pascarella, 1996; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella &

Terenzini, 1980; Seidman, 1991). Especially important and successful to retention of minority students is the hiring of minority-faculty (Guyette & Heth, 1984; Davis, 1994).

Administrative steps and strategies to increase inclusion impacts retention in a positive way (Alfred, 1983; Cahape & Howley, 1992; Davis, 1994; Falk & Aitken, 1984; Steward, 1993; Terenzini, et al., 1993). The types of learning environments and supplemental instruction available is also important in retention (Congos & Schoeps, 1997 & 1998; Tinto, 1993; Tinto & Love, 1996; Tinto, Russo & Kadel, 1994).

Providing curriculum that is relevant to American Indian students plays heavily on their retention in college (Almeida, 1996; Bold Warrior, 1992; Jorgensen, 1993; Murguia, Padilla & Pavel, 1991). In addition to the curriculum, the extracurricular and social support for students and parents play an important role in retention and completion of programs (Bean, 1982; Bean & Bradley, 1986; Lenning et al., 1980; Tomlinson & Cope, 1988).

The importance of training faculty to work with culturally diverse students as well as develop ethnic studies and ethnic centers is also an important function of institutions (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990; Cahape & Howley, 1992; Indian Nations At Risk Task Force, 1991; Osborne & Cranney, 1985; Rendon, 1994; Scott, 1986; Steward, 1993; Terenzini, et al., 1993). This does not mean, however, reducing standards but changing the institution to meet the needs of minority students (Richardson & Skinner, 1991).

There are many family factors that influence students and their completion and noncompletion in postsecondary education. Of the utmost importance in successful retention of all students, especially minority and nontraditional students are the value, support, and encouragement family and peers give to postsecondary education (Bean &

Metzner, 1985; Deever, et al., 1974; Falk & Aitken, 1984; Farbaugh-Dorkins, 1991; HeavyRunner & Morris, 1997; Indian Nations At Risk Task Force, 1991; Lin, 1990; Padilla, et al., 1997; Pavel & Padilla, 1993; Seidman, 1992; Tate & Schwartz, 1993; Wenzlaf & Biewer,1996). American Indian students have difficulty with the balance between home life--i.e.,culture--and school life (Atkinson et al. , 1990; Bransford, 1982; Cahape & Howley, 1992; Garrod & Larimore, 1997; Padilla, et al., 1997; Wenzlaf & Biewer, 1996).

In addition to societal, organizational, institutional, and family factors that affect the students in their completion and noncompletion of postsecondary programs, individual factors also play an important role. Positive external and internal factors such as different cultural values, housing, roommates, family and work demands play a large role in persistence (Cahape & Howley, 1992; Carter & Wilson, 1992; Lenning et al., 1980; Noel, et al.,1986; Padilla, 1998; Padilla et al.,1997; Pavel, et al., 1998; Richardson, et al.,1987; St. John & Noell, 1989; Schwartz, 1989; Seidman, 1992; Tierney, 1980; Tinto, 1993). In addition to these external and internal factors, American Indian students also deal with values, beliefs, spirituality, and cultural identity issues in college (American Indian Rehabilitation Programs and Unmet Needs, 1990; Bold Warrior, 1992; Castillo, 1982; Garrod & Larimore, 1997; HeavyRunner & Morris, 1997; Huffman, Sill & Brokenleg in Browne & Evans, 1987; Lin, 1980; Ogbu in Pottinger, 1990; Swisher & Deyhle, 1987). Living on campus and social integration of all kinds is seen as important to retention (Anderson, 1981; Bean, 1985; Eaton & Bean, 1995; Pascarella,1986). As a result of these identity issues, American Indian students often see instructors as uncaring

and classroom experiences as irrelevant to their lives (Brown, 1995; Reyhner, 1993; Van Hamme, 1996).

Grade point average (GPA), career goals, and high aspirations are important individual factors to successful retention (Astin, et al., 1996; Bean, 1982; Bean & Bradley, 1986; Gates & Creamer, 1984; Getzlaf, Sedlacek, Kearney, & Blackwell, 1984; Pantages & Creedon, 1978; Pottinger, 1990; Pelavin & Kane, 1990; Schwartz, 1989). Other individual factors that favor retention are that full-time students persist better than part-time students (Brawer, 1995), and females who participate in leadership roles and men who have support from home do better than do those students who do not have these factors in their lives (Bean & Bradley, 1986; Bean & Vesper, 1994; Pascarella, 1986).

In summary, minority students come to college with many needs (Rendon, 1994; Smith, 1989). They must be able to develop noncognitive skills to succeed (Bailey & Hafner, 1979; Beaty & Christe, 1986). The campus environments that provide the most comfortable environment for minority students are those where the student minority participation rate is 20-25%. This allows for a comfort zone where the other essential factors are more easily and successfully addressed (Richardson et al.,1987).

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to examine relevant literature as a means of establishing background and foundation for the methodological approaches used to conduct the research in this study. The chapter contained the supportive thought, facts, concepts, and research necessary to understand the factors contributing to the completion and noncompletion of American Indian students in postsecondary education. Although there exists a substantial body of research concerning student retention and student

attrition, very little of the research has focused on the American Indian student in higher education. The literature review in this chapter was focused in five areas: key aspects of retention of all students in postsecondary education; minority student retention, specifically that of Hispanic and African American students; American Indians in postsecondary education, specifically the organizational, institutional, individual, and family factors that relate to retention and attrition of these students; a review of two-year colleges; and finally, a review of the tribal college experience.

Table 1: Factors Associated with Student Completers and Noncompleters

Factor Category	Individual Factors	Literature Source
Societal Factors:	• Undereducated segment of society, minorities graduating high school, college	U.S. Bureau of the Census (1990), Astone & Nunez-Wormack (1990)
	• More leavers than stayers.	Tinto (1993)
	• Statistics about minority students in college/ persistence and attrition	Astone & Nunez-Wormack (1990); Tinto(1993); Carter & Wilson (1992); Pascarella & Terenzini (1998)
	• For the next 10 to 20 years, Heterogeneity of student body change dramatically.	Pascarella & Terenzini (1998), Tinto (1993), Carter & Wilson (1992)
	• American Indian population, employment, high school/ college graduation statistics.	Pavel, et. al. (1998); Astone & Nunez-Wormack (1990); Cahape & Howley (1992); Eberhard (1989).
	• Issues of socio-alienation for American Indians on predominately white campuses.	Melchior-Walsh (1994)
	• Need for American Indians to integrate into college environment to succeed- to walk in both worlds, cultural integration.	Scott (1986); Wenzlaf & Biewer (1996), James (1992); Garrod & Larimore (1997); Fallows (1987)
	• Tribal college as successful example of when state, local, and tribe work together	Tijerina & Biemer (1987-88)
Organizational Factors	• Importance of recruitment, pre-enrollment, admissions, counseling, enrollment, integration into college in retention process	Seidman (1989); Alfred (1983); Seidman (1992); Pascarella (1980); Pascarella & Terenzini (1986); Witt & Handal (1984)

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	• Background information on community colleges	Seidman (1995); Grubb, et. al. (1999), Stein (1992), Astone & Nunez-Wormack (1990); Pascarella & Terenzini (1998); Pascarella & Terenzini (1995-96); Tinto (1993); Blustein, et. al. (1986); Hankin (1996)
	• Background information on tribal colleges	Boyer (1997), Hill (1995); Stein (1992); Oppelt (1990); Bigart (1997); Congress of the United States (1993); General Accounting Office (1995); National Association of Land Grant Colleges (1995); Cross & Shortman (1995); Cahape & Howley (1992); Indian Nations At Risk Task Force/ National Advisory Council on Indian Education (1991)
	• Need for sensitivity in the retention of diverse students.	Pascarella & Terenzini (1998)
	• First year is of key-importance in retention	Tinto (1993); Astin, Tsui & Avalos (1996)
	• High non-completion rate in two-year colleges	Astin, Tsui, & Avalos (1996); Tinto (1993), Anderson (1981)
	• Students in vocational programs persist better	Gates & Creamer (1984)
Institutional Factors:	• Relationship between faculty and persistence: quality of instruction; helpfulness; connection of content to future career goals; informal contact with students ; outside of classroom; as role models; trusting relationship;	Bean & Vesper (1994); Bean (1982); Pascarella & Terenzini (1980); Seidman (1991); Pascarella (1980); Dehyle (1992); Endo & Harpel (1982); Pascarella (1996); Tinto (1993)

	level of student's higher order thinking skills	
	• Learning communities as successful strategy for retention	Tinto & Love (1995); Tinto, Russo & Kadel (1994)
	• Supplemental instruction improves retention.	Congos & Schoeps (1997 & 1998)
	• Retention programs must actively monitor students.	Farbaugh-Dorkins (1991); Eaton & Bean (1995)
	• Higher cost, more prestigious colleges have higher persistence rates.	Astin (1996), Lenning, Sauer & Beal (1980).
	• Each institution must study their campus environment for what works in retention.	Hossler (1984)
	• Importance of relevant curriculum for American Indians.	Almeida (1996), Bold Warrior (1992); Jorgensen (1993); Murguia, Padilla & Pavel (1991)
	• Social supports (co-curriculars, out reach to parents, etc) predict persistence or non-persistence, promote sense of belonging.	Tomlinson & Cope (1988); Lenning, Sauer & Beal (1980); Bean & Bradley (1986); Bean (1982)
	• In assessing programs for successful retention, interplay of all internal and external factors important.	Cabrera, et. al (1992)
	• Four step retention process; recruit ethically, orient honestly; inform continuously; advise developmentally.	Creamer (1980); Fidler (1991), Terenzini & Pascarella (1984)
	• Administrative steps for increased retention	Alfred (1983); Falk & Aitken (1984); Davis (1994); Cahape & Howley

		(1992); Steward (1993)
	• HBCUs	Pascarella, et. al. (1987); Astin (1996)
	• Successful retention strategies for minorities.	Astone & Nunez-Wormack (1990)
	• Faculty and staff must have training to work with culturally diverse students; a tolerant campus atmosphere must exist	Rendon (1994); Terenzini, et. al. (1993); Astone & Nunez-Wormack (1990); Indian Nations At Risk Task Force (1991); Osborne & Cranney (1985); Steward (1993); Cahape & Howley (1992)
	• Ethnic studies and ethnic centers are essential to minority student success.	Astone & Nunez-Wormack (1990); Osborne & Cranney (1985); Scott (1986)
	• Strategies for administrators, faculty members to increase inclusion.	Terenzini, et. al. (1993)
	• Changes in institutions to meet needs of minorities is not reduction of standards. Environments must be adapted.	Richardson & Skinner (1991)
	• Statistics on four-year degree attainment.	Astin, Tsui, & Avalos (1996)
	• The campus as the "black box" experience-what happens during the college experience?	Padilla (1998).
	• Issues of admissions standards for minority students.	Davis (1992); Davis (1995; Falk & Aitken (1984); Fallows (1987); Astin (1996)
	• Minority faculty as a retention tool.	Guyette & Heth (1984); Davis (1994)
Family Factors:	• Importance of parents/family who value/encourage college in retention	Pavel & Padilla (1993), Seidman (1992); Wenzlaf & Biewer (1996);

		HeavyRunner & Morris, (1997)
	• For non-traditional students, family is more important than social integration in college.	Farbaugh-Dorkins (1991), Bean & Metzner (1985)
	• Value orientation toward tasks/ achievement for American Indians	Lin (1990)
	• American Indian risk factors	Guyette & Heth (1984); Falk & Aitken (1984); Cahape & Howley (1992), Pavel, et. a. (1998)
	• American Indians and the difficult balance between home (culture) and college (inner conflict)	Padilla, et. al. (1997); Garrod & Larimore (1997); Atkinson, Jennings & Liongson (1990); Cahape & Howley (1992); Bransford (1982); Wenzlaf & Biewer (1996)
	• Necessity of support system (home or school) for American Indian students.	Indian Nations At Risk Task Force/ National Advisory Council on Education (1991); Padilla, et. al. (1997); Pavel & Padilla (1993); Tate & Schwartz (1993)
	• The importance of immediate and extended family and tribal group to American Indians.	Falk & Aitken (1984); Deever, et. al. (1974)
Individual Factors:	• Underrepresentation of minority groups in college/ leak in the educational pipeline.	Astin (1995)
	• Classroom experience is irrelevant to American Indians' lives	Van Hamme (1996)
	• American Indians and interaction with faculty	Brown (1995)

	• American Indian students see teacher as uncaring: interst in subject matter, not people	Reyhner (1993)
	• American Indian values, beliefs, spirituality, cultural identity	American Indian Rehabilitation Programs and Unmet Needs (1996), Castillo (1982), Wenzlaf & Biewer (1996), Lin (1990), Garrod & Larimore (1997), Bold Warrior (1992), Huffman, Sill & Brokenleg in Browne & Evans (1987), Ogbu in Pottinger (1990); Swisher & Deyhle (1987); HeavyRunner & Morris (1997)
	• Persistence & attrition	Padilla, Trevino, J., Gonzolez, & Tevino, J., (1997), Tinto, (1993); Pavel, et. al. (1998); Carter & Wilson (1992); Cahape & Howley (1992)
	• Types of retention, completion of personal goals	Lenning, Sauer, & Beal (1980)
	• Positive external factors in retention to individuals: peers/role models; cultural values that promote retention; access to information about college/importance of, confidence from teachers/counselors	Seidman (1992), Padilla (1998); Richardson, Simmons, & de los Santos (1987)
	• Negative external factors in retention to individuals; housing, roommate, transportation, work demands, family demands, child care, social demands, discrimination.	Seidman (1992), St. John & Noell (1989), Tierney (1980)

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	• Financial aid issues/ more eligibility for those who need more time to complete school.	Seidman (1992), Mingle (1987); St; John & Noell (1989); Pottinger (1990); Wright (1991)
	• Positive internal forces in retention: academic skill/achievement; motivation; enjoyment of learning; career goals; self-confidence; pre-college self-concept; values.	Seidman (1992); Schwartz (1989)
	• Negative internal forces in retention: procrastination; loneliness; lack of assertiveness; fear of success/failure; boredom.	Seidman (1992), Noel, Levitz, Saluri, and Assoc., (1986),
	• GPA as predictor of future academic success/performance, low GPA-don't persist	Getzlaf, et al. (1984); Bean & Bradley (1986); Bean (1982); Tinto (1993); Pantages & Creedon (1978); Astin, et. al. (1996); Schwartz (1989); Pottinger (1990)
	• Full-time students persist better than part-time students	Brawer (1995)
	• Gender related reasons for non-completion: women-leadership skills; men-encouragement from parents & occupational certainty; women have higher GPA's than men	Bean & Vesper (1994); Pascarella (1986); Bean & Bradley (1986)
	• Importance of social integration	Pascarella (1986); Eaton & Bean (1995)
	• Importance of career goals to retention	Gates & Creamer (1984)
	• Students living on campus more successful than those off; social life/ positive relationships of campus life	Anderson (1981); Bean (1985)

	• Participation in cultural awareness workshops promotes openness to diversity	Pascarella (1996)
	• Aspirations are as important as attendance.	Pelavin & Kane (1990)
	• Non-traditional students with academic adjustment problems don't persist.	Farbaugh-Dorkins (1991)
	• Minority students come to college with many needs.	Rendon (1994); Smith (1989)
	• Minority students must be able to have /develop non-cognitive skills to succeed.	Bailey & Hafner (1979); Beaty & Chiste (1986)
	• 20-25% minority campus participation level is the "comfort zone".	Richardson, Simmons, & de los Santos (1987).

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore and identify societal, organizational, institutional, family, and individual factors associated with American Indian students' completion and noncompletion in a tribal college in northern Minnesota.

The following questions were addressed through this study:

- What societal factors --i.e., racism, difficulty with socio-alienation, and cultural integration--influence American Indian student completion and noncompletion of postsecondary programs?
- What tribal college organizational factors--i.e., advisors, registration process, support programs--influence American Indian student completion and noncompletion of postsecondary programs?
- What tribal college institutional factors--i.e., faculty, cultural integration, and curriculum--influence American Indian students' completion and noncompletion rates?
- What family factors of American Indians students affect their completion and noncompletion of their postsecondary goals?
- What individual factors of American Indian students--i.e.,motivation, readiness for college, study skills, and problem solving ability--affect completion and noncompletion of their postsecondary goals in tribal college?

In order to investigate these questions, a qualitative research design was used. Qualitative research provides indepth information into fewer cases. It concentrates on

words and observations to express reality and attempts to describe people in natural situations (Krueger, 1994). Qualitative research can refer to research about peoples' lives, lived experiences, behaviors, emotions, and feelings (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Because of the nature of this research problem and the cultural perspective by American Indians of telling stories, the qualitative approach used in this study of collecting data by individual interviews and focus groups was well suited for this study.

Qualitative research methods are especially useful in understanding how individuals view their world, in showing how individuals' perceptions and intentions in situations determine their behavior, in exploring phenomena to find explanations, and in providing concrete, detailed illustrations of phenomena. Qualitative procedures are extremely useful in understanding real-world phenomenon (Krathwohl, 1998). There are some distinct advantages to qualitative research that make it a perfect fit for exploring the phenomenon surrounding why some American Indian college students complete their goals in college and why some do not . Qualitative research allows people to tell their stories, thus humanizing the data, and bringing to life the people, situations, and problems.

Many American Indians learn their way in life through stories (Cleary & Peacock, 1998). The telling of stories can be a profound form of scholarship moving serious study close to the frontiers of art in the capacity of storytelling to express complex truth and moral context, in intelligible ways (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The use of interviewing as a way for participants to tell their stories provided the opportunity to bring meaning to their tribal college experience in a style that was natural to them. The stories of the students gave insight into the reasons why their experiences led them to

achievement of their goals or prevented them from that achievement. The telling of stories is the most indepth way of knowing about life's experiences and what impact those experiences have on individuals. Among the current methods being used to attempt to capture authenticity are listening to the voices of the people and making sure they are heard through writing, telling the stories of the people as metaphors and examples of schooling experiences, and presenting the perspectives of others in an attempt to encourage readers to see through a different lens (Swisher, 1998). This study included oral transmission by use of interviews and focus groups. Interviews and focus groups helped to ensure that the data collected was centered in the American Indian culture. Because these methods of learning are so implicit in the American Indian culture, the phenomenological design using interviews and focus groups made it possible to gather information in as respectful, authentic, and accurate a manner as possible from an outsider's --i.e., non-Indian--perspective. By use of interviews and focus groups, this study used a culturally competent approach. By conducting indepth interviews, the researcher was able to preserve the American Indian art of storytelling by having participants tell their own stories of their experiences in college. Apart from the abundant studies about the failure of American Indians to complete college, this study gives a broad picture of this phenomenon by questioning participants on societal, organizational, institutional, family, and individual factors. Hopefully this information will offer insight, enhance understanding, and perhaps offer a new and meaningful guide to action on the issues that confront American Indian students in tribal colleges(Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Purposive interviewing, or theoretical sampling, was used which means the researcher selected the individuals for the study from a pool of those who are American Indian and also met some information need or provided special access (Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Krathwohl, 1998). In this case, those selected to participate had particular information to share from personal perspectives about their experiences at a tribal college. These individuals were selected because the researcher believed they could expand the depth of what is already known about the societal, institutional, program, family, and individual factors in tribal college programs that affect the completion and noncompletion of American Indian students. A Data Collection Analysis Diagram is found in Attachment A. Chapter Three includes a discussion of the:

- population and sampling procedures used;
- research design and rationale for the research method;
- instrumentation developed for conducting the research;
- data collection procedures and analysis used; and
- steps involved in conducting this study.

Study Sample

A purposive sampling was used to select specific participants in this study. A purposive sample is as a means of clarifying the concepts and constructs developed to describe and explain the phenomena studied (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Krathwohl, 1998). In this case, the phenomenon studied was the completion and noncompletion of American Indian students in a tribal college. However, even though every effort was made to capture a purposive sample, it is a leap of faith to generalize from any given instances to others like it (Krathwohl, 1998).

Prior to the solicitation of participants, the researcher completed the Human Subjects approval process required at the University of Minnesota. Approval was granted before any research was begun (Attachment B). Approval was extended for a second year on July 28, 2000 (Attachment C)

The sample included 13 American Indian students who made up two separate groups that attended a tribal college during the period 1996-1999: seven who successfully completed and six who did not complete their plan of study. The sample of seven American Indian completers and six American Indian noncompleters was selected based on national and local demographics for gender and age. National statistics on the demographics of American Indians attending college indicate that two-thirds to three-fourths of college attendees are female. Demographics at the tribal college studied indicate that 60% of the American Indian students attending in 1996-1999 were female. After an extensive search for participants in this study, eleven females and two males were selected. This varies from national and local demographics somewhat; however, these were the participants who were willing, available, and followed through on the interview and focus group process.

National demographics on the median age of American Indian students attending tribal college in 1997 was 29 to 30 years old. However, of the full-time students at the tribal college in this study in 1997-1998, only 40% were 23 years of age or older and 60% were 17-22 years of age. In this study, three participants were between the ages of 17-24 years old. Ten participants were between 25 and 60 years of age. Participants in this study closely resemble the population in two-year tribal colleges nationally.

The sample was established based on three criteria: age, gender, and whether the students completed or failed to complete their programs at the tribal college. Three additional factors were used in selecting interviewees for the study: (1) the interviewees were knowledgeable about their experiences at the tribal college; (2) interviewees agreed to participate and share their stories; and (3) interviewees represented a range of different points of view based on gender, age, and whether they completed or did not complete their programs.

After interviewing 13 participants no new information, conditions, or actions/interactions seemed to be emerging in the data. Collecting additional data seemed counterproductive. Even though there is always the potential for the "new" to emerge, there had been such repetition of data that the determination was made that more data would not have added significantly to the data already collected (Strauss & Corbin,1998). In interviewing 13 individuals, the same information was repeated by the participants, and there was a saturation of information (Seidman, 1998). Therefore, 13 participants, each completing three interviews (for a total of 36 interviews) were deemed sufficient to reflect the range of individuals who made up the population so that others outside the sample would be able to connect to the experiences of those interviewed.

Selection of the 13 participants took several weeks. In order to select the 13 participants, written permission to conduct this study was requested and received July 15, 1999 from the tribal college president. Next the tribal college registrar prepared for the researcher a list of all American Indian students attending the school during 1996-1999. A list of completers and noncompleters was also prepared by the registrar at the tribal college in November, 1999. After the researcher's graduate committee granted approval

on the research design, a mailing list of potential participants in the study who were former tribal college students was developed. Two letters were drafted describing the research study. One letter was a request to American Indian faculty member soliciting names of former students who met the criteria of the study (Attachment D). The other letter was a request to former students to participate in three interviews and one focus group (Attachment E). Potential participants were also given a Consent Form (Attachment F) to read, sign, and return. A Background Form requesting demographic information from prospective participants and a stamped, self-addressed envelop was included in each letter (Attachment G).

One week after the letters were sent, follow-up telephone calls were made to prospective participants. Individuals who did not have telephones were sent a second mailing covering the same information as those who received telephone calls requesting their participation. During the telephone calls potential participants were told that a selected representative sample would be made from all willing participants. Confirmation of participation was made with some individuals in that first telephone call. Others were called back one week later.

Some individuals from the initial list were unavailable or unwilling to participate in the study. Those who declined said they felt it would take too much of their time or they just were not interested in participating. Therefore the researcher requested additional names within the sample range from the tribal college registrar and the American Indian faculty at the college. Letters and telephone calls were then made to this expanded list until 13 individuals--seven completers and six noncompleters--had agreed to participate. The selected participants were then scheduled for appointments for

the first interviews. These interviews as well as subsequent interviews took place wherever it was most convenient and comfortable for the participants. Locations included homes, health clinics, community centers, work sites, and restaurants. The interviews ranged in length from one to two hours each. Reminder telephone calls were made the night prior to the morning of the interviews. Of the original participants, three did not complete the interview process. In two instances the individuals had work and family schedules that were too hectic and they could not find the time to be interviewed. In the third case, incarceration prevented the individual from being available for interviewing. Two of the three participants did not show for scheduled interviews on two or more occasions. In the third case, the individual contacted me and cancelled before we began the interviews. When a participant failed to return calls or come to appointments, a letter was sent thanking them for their interest and explaining they would be replaced by another participant if they did not contact the researcher. I have no doubt that these three individuals would have had valuable information to share, and there is a possibility that my results would have been different with their involvement by the mere nature of their stories. However, the sample interviewed was alike in most respects, so this researcher was confident the results would be similar in either case. A brief profile of the participants is provided in Table 2. A more indepth description of participants is found in Attachment H.

Table 2: Participant Profiles.

Category	Description
Completers:	
	E. is a sixty-year-old male who is an enrolled member on his reservation. He earned an associate of applied science (A.A.S.) degree in human services from a tribal college in 2000 and plans to be a counselor in the chemical dependency field.
	B. is a 25-year-old male who discovered his Indian roots when he was 25 years old. He completed an associate of arts (A.A.) degree at the tribal college in 1996. He has 4 credits remaining to complete his bachelor of arts (B.A.) degree at a nearby university. He works at the Army National Guard and hopes to make the military his career.
	Z. is a 40-year-old single mother with four children. She is an enrolled member of her reservation. She graduated with an associate of arts (A.A.) degree from the tribal college in 1997. She is interested in a career such as social work where she can help people. She works part time as a teacher's aid in the public school system.
	M. is a forty-six-year old married woman who is an enrolled member of the reservation. She works full-time as the computer troubleshooter, technician, and telecommunications coordinator at the reservation health clinic. She is an enrolled member of her reservation. She received her associate of arts (A.A.) degree in 1997 from the tribal college. She is currently pursuing a four-year degree in management in a special evening program at a nearby private college.
	R. is a forty-three-year-old married woman who is an enrolled member her reservation. She earned her associate of arts (A.A.) degree in 1997. She immediately transferred to a nearby university where she completed her bachelor of arts (B.A.) degree in communications and began a master's

degree program. She is currently pursuing that degree while teaching at the university and the tribal college.

T. is a thirty-three-year-old single mother of two school-age children who is an enrolled member of the reservation. She works in human resources on the reservation. She became aware of her Indian heritage at the age of 20. She was awarded her associate of arts (A.A.) degree from the tribal college in 1998. She intends on pursuing her four-year degree when her children are older.

X. is a twenty-one-year-old single mother with two preschool age children. She does not associate with the Indian culture but is enrolled on her reservation. She received her associate of applied science (A.A.S.) degree in human services in 1998. She worked in that field for a short time and now is pursuing a degree as a medical technician in a private business college.

Noncompleters:

H. is a twenty-four-year-old married mother of two preschool/grade school age children. She is an enrolled member of her reservation. She is a medical assistant in an Indian clinic. H. received her medical training from a private business school. She went to the tribal college to take general education courses to apply toward a registered nursing degree. She did not attend long before dropping out because the schedule was more than she could handle with a full-time job and two children. She hopes to return to the tribal college someday when her children are older.

J. is a twenty-eight-year-old single woman with no children living with her parents. She works full-time at the reservation casino. J. tried attending the tribal college twice. Both times she did quite well and enjoyed school far more than she did in high school. Her problem is funding. She is not an enrolled member of an Indian tribe and has no records to qualify her for Indian funding. She has recently begun to attend classes at the tribal college again.

K. is a fifty-two-year-old divorced mother of adult children. She is an enrolled member of her reservation. She received her graduate equivalency diploma (GED) at the age of forty. SK.he took several classes from the tribal college when she was an employee of the reservation. She has also taken a course from time to time on her own at the tribal college. She hopes to complete her associate of arts (A.A.) degree.

S. is a forty-seven year-old-married woman with no children. She is an enrolled member her reservation. She has been an extension student at the tribal college. She is currently pursuing a degree through an independent distance learning college program from a private college.

H. is a thirty-eight-year-old single parent. H. has started courses at the tribal college several times but has not completed any courses. She wants to pursue a two-year degree but has issues with alcohol and transportation. She feels she is very good at working with troubled youth and would like to pursue that field someday when her life is more stable.

W. is a twenty-two-year-old single mother with three pre-school/elementary school-age children. She is an enrolled member of her reservation. She attended the tribal college for a short time. W. had issues with financial aid, child care and transportation along with conflicts with her Welfare-to-Work Program and quit. She hopes to return when her life is more stable.

Research Design

A phenomenological interview design was used in this study. The phenomenological point of view in research argues that it is through the experiences of the actors' own perspectives and how they construct a view of the world that determines how they act (Krathwohl, 1998; Kvale, 1996).

Data Collection Procedures

The following procedures were used in the collection of the data in this study:

- scheduled first interviews with the sample participants;
- completed Interview One (focused on life history), a 60-120 minute interview at a location convenient/comfortable to participant/s.
- tape recorded all interviews;
- during and immediately after each interview the researcher recorded observations;
- conducted Interview Two (focused on the details of the experience) and Interview Three (focused on the reflection of the meaning) in two-hour sessions individually with each of the 13 participants;
- tape recorded all interviews;
- during and immediately after each interview researcher observations were recorded;
- transcribed interviews;
- sent double- spaced transcripts to individual participants who could not attend the focus group for their reading on accuracy and to make corrections/changes. Included a stamped, self-addressed return envelop;
- conducted two focus groups: one with three noncompleters and one with two completers. Provided child care, dinner, and transportation.
- had participants review their transcripts before the focus group and/or took transcripts home to complete the review;
- tape recorded both focus groups;
- transcribed both focus groups;
- called all participants to confirm that individual interview transcripts were accurate;

- recorded necessary changes; and
- manually summarized data from individual interviews and focus groups.

Phenomenological Design

By using the phenomenological interview design as a basic mode of inquiry in this study the researcher tried to understand how the participants' perceptions of their experiences as students at a tribal college lead to their completion or noncompletion of their intended goals. Recounting narratives of experiences has been a major way throughout recorded history that humans have made sense of their experience. At the root of indepth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experiences of other people and the meanings they make of those experiences. At the heart of the phenomenological interview design is an interest in other individuals' stories because these stories are of worth (Seidman, 1998).

The indepth phenomenological interviewing involved conducting a series of three separate interviews with each of the 13 participants. A series of three interviews provides enough time, privacy, and trust so that the participant can relate his or her experience, reflect on that experience, and to some extent, make sense of it. The three-interview process allows one interview to build on another, so that a deepening understanding of the experience is developed with every interview. The data are the words of the participants (Cleary & Peacock, 1998). Each interview was between 60-90 minutes long. Often the second and third interviews were combined in one session, because the flow of conversation lead easily from the questions in the second interview into the questions in the third interview. Interviews were conducted at one-to two-week intervals. By using this method, the participants' behavior became meaningful and understandable when

placed in the context of their lives and the lives of those around them (Krathwohl, 1998; Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 1998). After completion of three interviews, two focus groups were conducted at the tribal college during a dinner get-together. Child care and transportation were provided. One of the focus group was conducted with completers and the other focus group with those identified as noncompleters.

The phenomenological design of interviewing and focus groups was used because it most closely matched a recent trend in tribal college scholarship to legitimize traditional scholarship. This trend emphasizes values such as oral transmission of information, spirituality, and community control (Boyer, 1997). The questions and methods used in this study were compatible with the traditional American Indian view of questioning and allowing for storytelling. Inherent in the American Indian culture is the art of storytelling and listening. These skills have been handed down from generation to generation as an effective means of learning from the elders, from others, and from nature (Garrod & Larimore, 1997; Thornton, 1998). The words, voices, stories, and perspectives are prevalent in recent reports of research and typify the intent of educational researchers to present more accurate interpretations of the qualitative research experience. To ensure that the interview and focus group questions in this study were compatible with American Indian concepts and culturally competent, American Indian scholar, Dr. Thomas Peacock, reviewed the interview and focus group questions.

Instrumentation

Two types of instrumentation were used in this study. The first was an indepth interview process developed by Irving Seidman (1998). The second method was focus groups, developed by Richard Krueger (1994).

Interviews

"I interview because I am interested in other people's stories. Most simply put, stories are a way of knowing" (Seidman, 1998, p.1). Indepth interviews were used in this study as a means of learning about the richness of the experiences that affected 13 American Indian who attended a tribal college. The interview questions and protocol were developed using Seidman's (1998) structure for indepth, phenomenologically based interviews. The method combines life-history interviewing and focused indepth interviewing informed by assumptions drawn from phenomenology (Seidman, 1998). In this approach the interviewer uses primarily open-ended questions. The major task is to build upon and explore the participant's responses to those questions. The goal is to have the participant reconstruct his or her experience, in this case, at the tribal college.

Interview one was a focused history interview in which the task was to put the participant's experience in context by asking him/her to tell as much as possible about past lives up until the time of becoming a students at the tribal college (Attachment I). The focus of the second interview concentrated on the details of the participant's experience at the tribal college. Participants were not asked opinions, but rather details of their experiences upon which their opinions were built (Attachment J). The third interview focused on the reflections of participants' experiences while at the tribal college (Attachment K). In the third interview there was no expectation that participants would give meaning to their experiences while at the tribal college, but rather the questions addressed the intellectual and emotional connections between the participants' school life experiences and the rest of their lives at the time they were students. In the third

interview, participants were encouraged to look at how the factors in their lives interacted to bring them to their present situations.

To insure consistency among the interviews it was important that each respondent understood the questions in the same way (Silverman, 1998). This was achieved by the researcher:

- piloting interview questions with American Indians;
- practicing interviewing skills ;
- giving the interviews to all participants; and
- conducting consistency checks on the coding of all open-ended questions.

Interviewing is a research approach to find out people's stories as a way of understanding their culture. It is a basic mode of inquiry (Kvale, 1996). At the root of indepth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. A basic assumption of indepth interviewing research is that the meaning people make of their experiences affects the way they carry out that experience (Seidman, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The interview questions were developed based on the researcher's review of the literature, personal knowledge, and intuition. The questions were developed with the help of a current group of students at the tribal college. They were reviewed by Dr. Thomas Peacock before piloting them on a small group of available volunteer American Indian staff and students at the tribal college. These steps were taken to ensure cultural competence. Based on the pilot, changes were made to the interview questions. Sample questions from each of the three interviews are in Table 3. A complete list of questions can be found in Attachments I, J, and K.

Table 3: Sample Interview Questions.

Interview	Question
#1: Focused Life History	
	What has school been like for you since you first remember it? In the past, how has school fit in with your home and community life? As far back as you can remember, what did your family/community tell you about formal education? About learning as a way of life?
#2: Details of Experience	
	What was school like for you at the tribal college? Why did you go to the tribal college? Why were you in school? Why was school important to you?
#3: Reflection on Meaning	
	How did the experience/s you had at the tribal college bring you to where you are in your life today? Did your tribal college experience prepare you in a cultural way better for the future than before? It that important to you? How would you like the tribal college experience to be different for your children?

Focus groups

A focus group is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. The intent is to promote self-disclosure among participants (Krueger, 1994). The focus group was appropriate as a research tool in this study because the group closely resembles the talking circle, an important representation in Ojibwe Indian culture. In a talking circle, a group talks openly and freely about a given topic or concern. Because this style of

communication is implicit in the Ojibwe culture, focus groups, as a modified version of the talking circle, were culturally appropriate to use.

"A group magnifies our individual wisdom and short-comings" (Krueger, 1994, p. 5). Focus groups were used in this study as a way of confirming and affirming the information collected in the indepth interview. Two focus groups were held: one group with the participants who were completers and one with the group of participants who were noncompleters. The focus groups gave each set of participants the opportunity to share their common experiences. Group discussion allowed the researcher the opportunity to hear the key themes emphasized from each group. More importantly, group discussion reinforced the importance of the themes that were brought out in the individual interviews. The purpose of using focus groups following the indepth interviews was to:

- verify the accuracy of summaries of comments made during the indepth interviews;
- add depth to key themes presented in the indepth interviews;
- add additional data;
- share common emotions and feelings about respondents' postsecondary experience; and,
- provide closure to the interview experience.

In the original focus group design by Krueger (1994) groups were organized in a series of at least three meetings for each group. However, for the purposes of this study, each group met only one time. This was an appropriate use of a focus group because, as Krueger stated, "Focus groups are valid if they are used carefully for a problem that is suitable for focus group inquiry" (Krueger, 1994, p. 6)

In this study, focus group were scheduled at the completion of the interviews and after the interview tapes had been transcribed. Two focus groups were held after the three indepth interviews were completed. One focus group was with completers and one focus group was with noncompleters. Focus group questions were designed based on responses during the individual interviews. Dinner was provided in a casual atmosphere prior to both focus groups. Child care and transportation were also provided. Several attempts were made to have all completers and all noncompleters together at two separate gatherings. However, only half of the completers and half of the noncompleters were able to attend the focus groups. Those students who could not attend the focus group were sent copies of their transcripts and asked to review them for accuracy and return the transcripts in the stamped return envelop provided. Those who did not return transcripts were called, or in some cases visited, by the researcher and asked for additions, changes or comments. No new information was gathered however a few revisions were made as a result of these contacts.

Those who could attend the focus groups reviewed their transcripts before the meeting and after the group took the transcripts home to complete the review. Any errors in the transcripts were recorded and changed. This procedure was intended to enhance the accuracy and consistency of the study. Personal notes were sent to all participants thanking them for their involvement in the interview and focus group process, and again after they reviewed the transcripts. In the final analysis the focus groups were not particularly useful in gathering new data because the two groups did not add any significant information to the data collected in the interviews. In each group participants tended to reinforce the information in the interviews and talk about the same issues

already covered in the transcripts. Participants seldom brought up new data. They were also more hesitant to converse in the small groups that they had been when they were in the individual interviews with the researcher. Perhaps this was because they felt uncomfortable with each other, not being very familiar with one another. Perhaps they felt some oppression from the group and did not feel they could speak freely. In spite of these facts, the focus groups did serve as a means of closure and individuals expressed that the groups added value to their interview experience.

Table four provides a list of the focus group questions.

Table 4: Focus Group Questions.

Focus Group	Question
Completers	
	Here are some of the preliminary findings I am hearing from your stories. Do they fit with your experiences? Am I capturing the essence of your experience? What Am I missing What do you feel is inaccurate?
Noncompleters	
	Here are some of the preliminary findings I am hearing from your stories. Do they fit with your experiences? Am I capturing the essence of your experience? What Am I missing? What do you feel is inaccurate?

Bias

As the researcher conducted this study some personal biases were acknowledged:

- having completed the literature review may have swayed interpreting events as more patterned and congruent than they really were, referred to as holistic fallacy (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis,1997)
- having a personal lack of exposure to the experiences revealed by participants may have made it difficult to fully understand and therefore possibly misinterpret responses;
- showing elite bias (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis 1997) by overweighing data from articulate, well-informed, usually high status informants, and under-representing data from less articulate lower status informants;
- being a non-Indian may have framed interpretation of responses of a cultural nature; and,
- having professional and personal relationships with faculty, staff, and administrators may have affected the reaction to responses about the tribal college.

Data Analysis

Data analysis begins during the interviewing process (Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Concepts are embedded throughout the interviews. After each interview and focus group field notes were taken on key concepts and themes heard in these sessions. At that time additional observations were noted. After all the interviews were completed, they were transcribed. Key concepts were pulled out and used as the basis for questions developed for the focus group discussions. These questions were reviewed with Dr. Thomas Peacock. Two focus groups were held

shortly after the development of the questions. Audio tapes from the two focus groups were transcribed at the completion of the focus groups. Those participants who could not attend the focus group sessions were sent their transcripts and asked to review them for accuracy and return them in the stamped, self-addressed envelop. Those who attended the focus groups reviewed their transcripts prior to the beginning of the group discussion or took the transcripts home after the focus group discussion to complete. Participants were contacted later and asked if the transcripts were accurate. Necessary corrections were made. Corrected transcripts were compared with notes from each interview.

Data analysis themes

The transcriptions were studied for key themes and concepts and compared to the individual interview transcripts for themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Attachment L is visual representation of the themes. The raw data was examined and conceptualized by discreet incidences, ideas, or events that represented a phenomenon in the participant's experience. Once the phenomenon was identified in the raw data, the concepts were categorized. As key concepts emerged in the review of the transcripts, they were cut out and taped on large sheets of butcher block paper under research question themes. This is a method developed by Richard A. Krueger (2000) called the Long-table Strategy. These themes and concepts were analyzed for their relationship to societal, organizational, institutional, family, and individual factors. If themes or concepts appeared that were not under these broad categories, a category entitled "other" was created. The main themes were assigned codes (Krathwohl, 1998). The themes were determined from the transcripts by combining information from all interviews, by the the emphasis given or dramatic statements made, by looking for similar or contradictory ways in which people

interpreted their experiences, and by repetition of key words and ideas until there was a set of connected themes (Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Key quotes or sections of interviews and focus groups were cut and taped under the theme and category illustrated. Then all key phrases and statements were cut and pasted on butcher block paper under themes. At this point the researcher had a research associate look at the data. Together the two looked for overarching themes and created key statements that represented those themes as a way to summarize the data.

Next various faculty members, administration, and staff at the tribal college, and American Indian community members were invited to review the data analysis theme sheets as a means of establishing consistency. They also were asked to determine the consistency of the categories, themes, and summary statements (Silverman, 1993). Eight people examined the data over a four-hour period. The group was asked by the researcher to study the sheets to answer these questions:

- Do these findings seem reasonable as compared to your experience?
- Are the themes and summarizing statements presented clearly?
- What questions do they raise that are not answered?
- What additional information would be helpful?
- Is there anything missing?

This method was also used as a means of comparison or triangulation of the data. By involving multiple sources of data, in this case field notes, interviews, focus groups, as well as the observations and introspection that took place in these meetings, accuracy was confirmed (Silverman, 1993). This exercise showed the results were consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 1998).

This was a valuable process for the researcher because suggestions were made, validation was given, and mini-focus groups spontaneously developed to discuss and compare the data with personal experiences and to project what implications the data may have for the tribal college and the community.

Summary

Because little is known about the societal, organizational, institutional, family, and individual factors that promote American Indian completers or hinder noncompleters from their goals, this study explored these factors using qualitative research methods including indepth interviews and focus groups. Participants, chosen from a subset of the American Indian community attended a tribal college from the school years 1996-1999. Selection from subset was further focused based on three factors: whether participants completed or did not complete their goals at the college; age; and gender.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter explores the findings of the data collected on the societal, organizational, institutional, family, and individual factors associated with American Indian students' completion and noncompletion in a tribal college in northern Minnesota.

The data collected from 13 individual interviews and two focus groups has been analyzed and is reported here by the themes that led to the research questions. Those themes were confirmed by participants as the key themes. However, as the data analysis unfolded, many subcategories emerged based upon the data collected from the 13 sets of interviews and two focus groups. A summary of the findings are in Attachment M.

Societal Factors

Four subcategories in the societal factors that influenced American Indian students' completion and noncompletion in postsecondary programs emerged from the data analysis. These subcategories were: (1) influence of one's own American Indian culture in the dominant culture; (2) reluctance on the part of American Indian families for American Indian children to be a part of the American Indian culture; (3) the blending of two cultures (cultural integration); and (4) racism.

Crabs in a bucket

> There is often a phenomenon in the Indian community that is called "crabs in a bucket." When any member of the community attempts to leave the community, to attend higher education or seek better employment, others in the community

will shame, put down, or ostracize that person. The message from community is, "You think you are better than we are."

One method often used to keep members of the community within its boundaries is teasing. Teasing is commonly used in the Indian community as a means of social correction. The teasing is done with humor, but the message is clear, as expressed by several of those interviewed: "These are the social/political/educational boundaries here in our community. If you are one of us, you will not stray too far from them." This scenario was expressed equally by completers and noncompleters.

Don't appear "Indian"

Overall in this study those individuals (both the completers and noncompleters) who had grown up knowing about their American heritage spoke of family members who had a history of discrimination and abuse from the majority culture. As a result of the experiences of family members (usually parents and grandparents) there was a desire to protect children and grandchildren from that abuse. The predominant memory for those interviewed who "grew up Indian" was that even though the culture was important to their parents and grandparents both parents and grandparents avoided exposing the children to the culture in hopes the children would not "appear Indian" in the (majority) public eye. This has historically been true in the community in which this study took place. In the past 10 to15 years there has been a renewed interest with the younger generation in reclaiming their American Indian heritage. The tribal college has had a tremendous influence on that development. However, the experiences of those interviewed in this study represented the past. These feelings were strongly illustrated by a middle-aged woman who said, " I always had it [my Indian heritage]. Once I got

married my mom couldn't stop me from visiting my cousins [on the reservation]. We used to get grounded a lot [when we were kids] because we went on the reservation" (K.).

A balancing act

Over the past 100 years, as the American Indian community in which this study was conducted became more integrated into the white community, greater assimilation into the white community has taken place. An emerging theme in this study, as well as others (Cleary & Peacock, 1998) was that the importance of one's American Indian heritage had less to do with assimilation, physical appearance, or marriage, and more to do with the emphasis placed on the exposure to and maintenance of the culture within the family and the within community in which the participants lived. Whether a one was new to his or her American Indian heritage or had always been aware made no difference; participants discussed their struggle between tradition and assimilation. All participants were at various stages of achieving a balance between Indian and majority culture. This was true for completers and noncompleters. As a 25-year-old man, a completer, who discovered his Indian heritage at the age of 15 said, " I had the opportunity at the tribal college to begin to get in touch with my heritage. Then I went back to my [white] community. The tribal college opened my eyes and I have a greater awareness and desire to know more about my Indian heritage"(B.).

Fighting the family battles

Overall, participants in the study who had grown up aware of their American Indian heritage, especially those with more Indian physical characteristics, spoke of their awareness of both covert and overt sense of racism toward them in school as early as kindergarten. Since all those interviewed attended public schools, these were their early

experiences in the dominant community. Indian children who are mainstreamed in the public school find out early how they are perceived as different by some.

Interviewees told similar stories about their experiences in school and in the community. These experiences had a very negative impact on their feelings about school. Interviewees told stories of being harassed because they had American Indian names. One woman who attended public grade school in the 1960s said, " I was forced to eat fish on Fridays in the school cafeteria because the cook assumed, because I was Indian, that I must be Catholic." This woman whose family was the only Indian family in the neighborhood said, "I had regular battles [fights] in the neighborhood to defend my younger siblings from continuously being accused of any wrongdoings that went on because we were the Indian kids" (K.).

The following examples in Table 5 are the voices of the interviewees and represent the four subcategories discussed in societal factors.

Table 5: Societal Factors

Theme:	Comment:
Crabs in a Bucket (Culture within the dominant culture)	• "I think most Indian people always congregate around their own people. If there are two Indian people in a school and one is on one end and one in on the other end, they find each other, either for support or something. It's just the way it is. Somebody that understands" (K.). • "Yeah, throughout school I didn't get involved a lot. Indian kids usually didn't. It wasn't okay in our community. Kids can be cruel on both sides [Indian and non-Indian]. That tension is always a part of my life . It never leaves. It'll

always come back in some situations" (Z.).

Don't appear "Indian"
(Reluctance for Indian children to be associated with Indian culture.)

- "My mom tried to bring us up not on the reservation so we wouldn't have the problems as Indians that she had. We could never understand why she'd punish us when we went out there. Most of our relatives were out there. She tried to protect us from that" (K.).

A balancing act
(Cultural integration)

- "We were at this Catholic funeral and they had all three branches of the military there because he had been in all three and served in two wars. When they shot off the guns, an eagle came out of the north right over the river and flew over and just soared so beautiful. Everyone stopped what they were doing, even the priest, and somebody passed around a tobacco bag and everybody took a pinch of it and threw it out. The priest stopped and took some tobacco. As that eagle flew around this way, one eagle flew from the south and met it and they flew back. It was like they were coming to get him, to pull him where he belonged. It was Indian and non-Indian coming together again, accepting. Accepting us for who we are and accepting them. To realize that the White culture isn't the dominant one" (K.).

Fighting the family battles
(Racism)

- "When I started school, in kindergarten or first grade, I came home and remember telling my dad that some kids were teasing me and calling me a little squaw, and do your squaw sit, and this and that. I remember telling them I'm

not going back to school. I don't like that" (H.).

- "That's what I'm going to practice. I practice that with my little guys all the time. They get called names, but I said I'm Indian and I'm white and I'm proud of both. The white people don't know how to address that, and they don't. But that's what we gotta learn" (E.).

Organizational Factors

There were four subcategories that emerged from the data analysis that related to tribal college organizational factors that influenced American Indian students' completion and noncompletion of postsecondary programs. These subcategories related to the tribal college were: (1) accessibility of the college; (2) cultural aspects; (3) support services; and (4) financial aid. Table 4 illustrates themes and comments made by participants.

It's close to home

Regardless of whether completers or noncompleters, a description of an accessible environment emerged from the data. Participants attended the tribal college primarily because of the location. It was nearby. Interviewees living on reservation reported this was the only reason they attended the tribal college. They would not have attended college if the tribal college had not been nearby. They did not consider driving 20 miles to the nearby university or technical college. This was true for individuals living on the reservation as well as those living in a 20-30 mile radius of the college. Other reasons that made the tribal college inviting and accessible were the cost, the fact that the campus was small and easy to negotiate, and that the class sizes were small. Many comments addressed the warm atmosphere on campus where faculty and staff not only knew each other by name, but knew students by name and were friendly and

welcoming toward them. As one participant said, "It's nice and relaxed and student-friendly here" (B.). As one non-completer who has recently re-entered the college said, "I went to the tribal college because it was close to home. Smaller class size. I like that, because I feel they can deal more with the students instead of having a whole ton of people. The main thing is it was close to home and cheaper" (J.).

A comfort zone

The data indicated that the tribal college, with the mix of people, faculty, and the environment helped completers and noncompleters learn more about their American Indian culture and their lives. Data revealed that such aspects of the tribal colleges as the architecture, the art work, and the cultural displays gave participants a sense of awareness and pride in their heritage as well as providing a welcoming atmosphere. This was true regardless of whether students identified themselves as traditional American Indians or as those who were raised in a more non-traditional environment. As one of the completers, a woman in her 30s who completed her A.A .degree at the tribal college after attending many other colleges said, "There are other Indian students and teachers here. It makes it more comfortable. If you don't have a mix of people--in a lot of settings, you're the one that stands out. That's been all through [my] life, so it's nice to be in a setting with more of your own. I was not as apt to speak up in most of the classes I took a long time ago in Minneapolis. It [tribal college] gives a different perspective, your answers and the line of thinking" (Z.).

I need some help because I don't know where I'm at!

Support services at the tribal college included tutoring, financial supports, emergency loans, admissions and registration assistance, access to transcripts and transfer

supports, accommodations and modifications for disability needs, and help from advisors and counselors. Overall, students at the tribal college thought they received the support services they needed to be successful in their programs. One student expressed it best when she told the story about being so scared to go back to school because she had done so poorly in her prior school experience. She wanted to go back to school, but felt stupid. She went to the tribal college and talked to a counselor and explained her situation. She had a defaulted loan from another school where she had left without formally withdrawing and her grade point average was very low. The counselor worked out the defaulted loan for her and told her to try a course at the tribal college, free of charge. She took that one class and got an A in the course. She is still attending classes at the tribal college, even though she has earned her associate of arts (AA) degree. She jokes about how they will never be able to get rid of her because she feels so at home there (T.).

A similar experience came from a noncompleter who talked about how she appreciated and respected her advisor for accommodating her individual needs. The advisor scheduled her for all morning classes because he knew she was a single parent and needed to be home later in the day. When she came the first day for classes and was frightened and didn't know where to go, he took her to her class (W.).

Another example of the support services at the tribal college was from a completer who said she was really in trouble financially at one point. She had no transportation and needed an emergency loan immediately. She was awarded a small grant from the American Indian College Fund (AICF) and was able to continue in her program without any interruption (X.).

A nontraditional-age completer who entered a special National Science Foundation-funded computer program project at the tribal college thought this was an ideal way for her to re-enter college. She was in a small cohort of students who received special treatment. The group was given priority registration and lots of individual support from the instructors. They were also given a stipend for their involvement. She completed her associate of arts (A.A.) degree in the program and is continuing on to complete her four-year degree at a nearby private college that also has a cohort model of instruction (M.).

Another completer who attended night classes after work brought her children to the tribal college to study and work in the commons area. Often her children would sit in on the classes and do their homework, help the custodial staff, or help in the art room. She thought they had a positive experience in the college environment. They also saw Mom working hard at college, which she thought was good role-modeling for them (T.).

Some students felt they did not receive enough support at the tribal college. As one student put it:

> If I were to send children to the tribal college, my preference would be to spoon feed them at least for the first semester and then let them on their own to go through the registration process...many students get turned away when they realized they have to see one person in financial aid and another person for registration.....(S.).

A noncompleter talked about the lack of counseling she got. She was given a pamphlet on a program and thought it might be a fit and signed up for classes. She felt she had long-term goals for herself, but she "just broke down and couldn't get herself

back together." She disappeared from the tribal college, too ashamed to ask for help or to acknowledge that she was quitting. When someone called from the tribal college to check on why she had not been attending, she said she wanted to come back but couldn't. The suggestion was made to discuss options with instructors. One instructor was willing to work with her, but the others said she was too far behind. She did not complete any of the courses for the semester (H.).

Other supports that were lacking for students were evening child care, child care for children under the age of two, and adequate transportation to college.

Finding the money

Overall, the findings here illustrate that students, whether completers or noncompleters, needed extensive financial support to attend the tribal college. The findings also showed that financial issues were the main cause for leaving college for four out the six noncompleters interviewed. All seven of the completers interviewed had college financing in place throughout their schooling at the tribal college. Financial aid issues for students attending a tribal college include such things as qualifying to receive federal funding, funding from one's tribe, or American Indian funding from the national level, such as the American Indian College Fund-AICF, or American Indian Higher Education Consortium Funding-AIHEC. Students had very different experiences in accessing funding at the tribal college. One student, who had attended the tribal college in 1991 did not receive financial aid because she was not an enrolled member of any Indian reservation and had no proof of Indian blood. She also did not qualify for federal financial aid because she was considered a dependent of her parents until the age of 24, even though she was living independently. As a result, her personal finances did not last

very long and she had to quit. Now, at age 28, in order to attend college, she is living back at home, working full-time, and taking out loans to pay for classes (J.). She represents many students at the college, who even though they have Indian blood, are not able to trace the family blood lines, or do not qualify for the blood quantum on their reservations to be an enrolled members of the tribe, which would automatically qualify an individual for American Indian funding. This is an unfortunate situation for American Indian students who seek an education at the tribal college for the cultural aspects offered.

Many students attending the tribal college had attended several other postsecondary institutions over time. Often they left a college without completing a semester or course and did not formally withdraw. As a result they defaulted on a loan or have outstanding loans that prevent them from entering the tribal college or continuing their education. If the student is an enrolled member of a tribe, sometimes the tribal college can pay off those loans and the individual can start school. However, if students have accrued a large debt or are not enrolled, they are denied college entrance until the loans are paid.

Another issue related to financial aid that respondents addressed was the requirement of being a full-time student in order to receive funding. Often students attending the tribal college have been out of school for awhile, have families, and/or full-time jobs and they cannot handle the rigor of 12 or more credits. As one student put it, "If I had gotten funding for a partial load I could have managed. But, as a single mother with 12 credits, a full-time job, and two children, I couldn't do it and I had to dropout" (Z.).

Most students have no idea what to do to access financial aid. As one non-traditional student said:

> Because I had received funding when I attended college years ago, I had to find out how much funding was still available to me. They [the financial aid officer at the tribal college] made it so easy for me. He took most of the burden away. He told me where to call, what to do, and what the college would do for me. The staff took care of so many of the details for me (T.).

Many of the students interviewed had a positive experience with the financial aid process at the tribal college. When students qualified, tribal funding was enormously helpful and accessible. If they were enrolled members of a tribe, it was easy for the financial aid officer to help them access funds from their tribe or national American Indian organizations such as AICF or AIHEC. As one student said, "We're talking within two weeks I had my financing all done and a letter was there. [I was told] to go ahead, start, don't worry about it" (T.).

The following examples in Table 6 are the voices of the interviewees and represent the four subcategories discussed in organizational factors.

Table 6: Organizational Factors

Theme:	Comment:
It's close to home (Accessibility)	• " It's close and easy..... a warm setting. I think it's nice and relaxed. I think the college is very student friendly" (T.).
A comfort zone (Cultural aspects)	• "What it [tribal college experience] has given me is it's taught me a lot about my

culture. The little things I've seen in watching non-Indian and Indian people come together and realize that we like each other. The college has pulled a lot of people together and a lot more understanding" (B.).

I need some help because I don't know where I am
(Support Services)

- "I felt like I'm going to do it, I'm going to do it. I went to school and I was so scared. I didn't know what to expect. I had my little paper out and what class was next. I went up to my advisor and said, hey man, I need some help because I don't know where I'm at. He brought me [to the class] and told the teacher why I was late. So I sat down and it was like I felt good about myself" (W.).

Finding the money
(Financial Aid)

- "That 's how it was. I had everything in order the first year when I went in '91. I went and when the money ran out, that was it. That was the end. It's not that I didn't want to go, but it was the end of the line for me. I wanted to go. I tried but I couldn't go" (J.).

Institutional Factors

There were four subcategories that emerged from the data analysis that related to tribal college institutional factors that influenced American Indian students' completion and noncompletion. In this study, institutional factors refer to the ways in which the tribal college specifically addresses the needs of its students. They were: (1) faculty; (2) staff (such as admissions counselor, registrar, advisors, counselors, and the financial aid officer); (3) culturally relevant instruction; and (4) planning for nontraditional-age students.

Faculty members go out of their way to help

Students overwhelmingly thought the faculty members were flexible, accommodating and supportive. In interviewing students, the researcher heard over and over how helpful and supportive faculty members were in the learning process. Whether students ended up as completers or noncompleters made no difference in their comments about faculty. Many students expressed how much more personal, hands-on, and real-to-life the instruction was compared to other colleges they had attended. Faculty members seemed to go out of their way to help students who were struggling to succeed. One non-completer told of how she just shut down. She was going to quit. She went to her teacher/advisor and fell apart, telling him all her problems. He was amazing, she told the researcher. He told her about someone else who had been in her situation and connected the two so they could talk. He really worked with her (W.).

Students also talked about how valuable it was in the learning process to have American Indians as faculty members because it was easier to relate to them. American Indian faculty members acted as content experts and/or guides to the understanding of American Indian culture. As one student expressed:

> You just can't get enough when you're there with him. He lives it. You see him out in the community or wherever he is, he's living what he's talking [teaching]. He's not just from 8 to 4 Joe Blow Indian. He's totally for real (T.).

Staff was friendly and responsive

Interviewees, whether completers or noncompleters, referred to the support and effective customer service they received from staff. Data reported several comparisons to the inferior customer service that participants had received at other colleges prior to their

tribal college experience. Students compared their previous college experiences with admissions counselor, registrar, advisors, counselors, and financial aid officers. They thought the support staff was responsive to their needs and very friendly at the tribal college.

Teaching the way I learn

Data revealed students thought they learned more about themselves, how they learned and who they were as individuals through the cultural understanding they acquired at the tribal college. Whether completers or noncompleters, students responded to the learning approaches used by faculty, small class size, and the opportunity to receive additional help. A student who said he appreciated the nonlinear teaching style of many of the instructors said he thought the tribal college was a place for him, where non-Indians looked at the Natives more in a supportive role as people who could help them (non-Indians) understand (B.).

One completer who learned when he was 15 that he was part Indian said he felt the experience of attending a tribal college had been very valuable for him not only academically but culturally. He not only learned in class about various tribes outside of class but was also exposed to cultural activities that enriched his understanding and interest in his own heritage. As he said, "Ultimately, it's part of my history. It's where I came from" (B.). Other students talked about the cultural events that took place throughout the year as deeply moving. One student explained how, during one ceremony, when the speaker was explaining in the Ojibwe language about his drum, she was overcome with tears as she remembered her grandfather doing the same ceremony (K.).

> It prepares me as an individual. I'm Native American. When I found out that he had a class in Lake Superior Chippewa, I took that and found out where I come from and that was beautiful. That was a real learning experience. Before that, I didn't know nothing and I thought I did. I didn't even know I was a traditional Indian. I thought I was just an Indian in Grand Medicine. [Before that class] I was just an Indian (E.).

I don't have to work overtime to be a student

Many of the students attending a tribal college are nontraditional-age college students. Most of these older adults work full-time, have families, and have full lives. They do not have a need or a desire to be involved in extracurricular activities. When asked about relationships they had developed at the tribal college, most referred to one or two students, but largely their contacts and relationships were with faculty members. What they needed and wanted was flexible scheduling, expanded evening programs, and evening services such as child care and support staff-i.e., tutoring, financial aid, and registration. They looked for schools and programs that could meet their scheduling needs.

Most felt much more directed in their goals than they had been earlier in their lives when they had attempted college. They expressed a joy of learning, achieving the goal they came for, and moving on. Many of these nontraditional-age students appreciated and benefited from the support that comes from a cohort of students within the class. As one student said:

> I didn't have time to get involved at all, but you still have a strong sense of community. The small college atmosphere and the activities always going on are

very important to feeling a part of a community...even if you don't have time to participate (M.).

The following examples in Table 7 are the voices of the interviewees and represent the four subcategories discussed in institutional factors.

Table 7: Institutional Factors

Theme:	Comment:
Faculty go out of their way to help (Faculty)	• "I liked the teachers. They were very supportive and made you feel you could do it. They were more personalized. All the more situational type teaching, which I enjoyed." (B.)
Staff was friendly and responsive (Staff)	• "I think the staff here has done more than my family has done." (T.) • "I went there last year for a transcript. I had not been back in three years and she knew my name." (B.)
Teaching the way I learn (Culturally relevant instruction)	• "I learned about not necessarily my tribe, but the tribes of Minnesota because that's what they focused on here in class. During the lunch hour, you'd come down to the commons and once a week they'd have some kind of Indian program...I need to understand more of my background to understand a lot of this stuff, but it was really neat to experience it." (B.)
I don't have to work overtime to be a student (Flexible scheduling for adult students)	• " Yeah. It's easier this time because the class is two nights a week and it's Monday and Wednesday, so I don't have to work

> overtime or anything. I can do my homework on the weekends, so I think it's better and will work out really well." (M.)

Family Factors

There were six subcategories that emerged from the data analysis that related to family factors that influenced American Indian students' completion and noncompletion. They were: (1) poverty, (2) alcohol, (3) teen pregnancy, (4) support (or lack of) for education, (5) role models, and (6) conflict associated with growing up Indian.

Poverty as a way of life

Poverty is a way of life in the American Indian community. As simplistic as this statement may seem, it is true that poverty pervades every aspect of the American Indian family. This was expressed in many ways by the students interviewed in this study. I talked to the oldest member of those interviewed who told me about being allowed to leave the boarding school to come home because he needed to work and help raise the younger siblings. One completer talked about how strict her mother was, how she worked from sun-up to sundown to put food on the table and how she begged to get away from home to go to boarding school. Her mother allowed it because going to boarding school meant one less child to feed, and her daughter could send home money to help support the rest of the family (R.). A non-completer interviewed told about how she dropped out of college because the new welfare-to-work system didn't allow her, as a single mother, a manageable way to go to school, work, and raise three children (W.). All those interviewed had been impacted by poverty which affected their access, achievement, and the completion of their educational goals throughout their lives.

Alcohol and chaos

The results of the data collected confirmed that alcohol is a pervasive issue in the American Indian family. In many stories the alcohol abuse was closely intertwined with other forms of abuse, neglect, and poverty. Alcohol abuse affected those interviewed personally, as family members, or as community members. No one interviewed was immune from the affects of alcohol abuse. In some cases alcoholic relationships resulted in interviewees becoming pregnant, dropping out of school, losing jobs, or the death of family members. The chaos that surrounds an alcoholic environment is common to the American Indian community and has a significant affect on completion and noncompletion of educational goals. As one noncompleter interviewed described her experience in an alcoholic environment as a child:

> I remember a lot of drinking and partying and stuff like that going on in my house. I remember I'd come home from school and I'd always think why do I even want to come home because nobody's going to be there or they're going to be drunk or something. That was hard to go to school because I didn't want to leave my mom and dad there so they would start drinking (W.).

Teen pregnancy and the educational gaps that follow

An emerging theme in the data was that even though teenage pregnancy was common, chaos and dysfunction were often a result. Data indicated one of the first affects of teen pregnancy was dropping out of school. Even when teens did not dropout of school, they often missed large portions of school, transferred to another school such as an alternative learning center or teen pregnancy school or at the very least tended to fall behind academically. For many interviewees, this resulted in being under-prepared

for college in many respects: academically, economically, and with needs for adequate child care and housing. These needs often resulted in frequently moving from one living arrangement to another. Many participants who had been young mothers lived at home with their mothers or with friends. Some married. Regardless of how participants dealt with teenage pregnancy, the result was an inconsistency in their learning which lead to academic under-preparedness when they entered higher education. In this study, five out of the seven completers and four out of the six noncompleters had educational gaps in their high school or college experience as a result of teenage pregnancies.

I don't know how to help you in school

Throughout the interviews it became apparent that even if birth families supported the education of those interviewed, there was a general lack of understanding of what kinds of support would be effective in fostering K-12 education and beyond. Five out of seven of the completers and three out of the six noncompleters expressed that even though their parents wanted them to finish high school, it was not generally part of family life to reward good school performance and attendance, or to help with/or reinforce the completion of homework. The ever-present issues of poverty and alcohol existed in many of the families. There was also a consistent pattern of instability in eight of the 13 participants' families, such as changing jobs frequently and moving regularly that had made it difficult for interviewees to have a stable home life that would also have promoted a stable school life. As one non-completer said, "[My parents would say] get through school and try to get into a college so you can make good of yourself" (W.). That was the extent of the support he received to attend school.

In spite of the lack of support for education from their birth families, interviewees were providing emotional, physical and financial support for the education of their own children, and in some cases had been supported by their spouses. For example, one noncompleter who completed her Graduation Equivalency Examination (GED) in her 40s explained how important education was to her and that was the one thing she put her foot down about with her own children--they were going to finish high school (K.). Another interviewee, a completer, told about how supportive her husband is in helping her keep a balance in her life as she pursues her graduate degree (R.).

Encouragement by example

Based on the data collected in this study, both the most positive and the most negative role models for the interviewees were their parents. Often the role modeling had less to do with the amount of education the parent had achieved and more to do with the manner in which they managed their lives and responsibilities.

> My mom raised me and my brother, after they got divorced. I was eight. She worked 40-50 hours a week and went to school like three-quarters time. We never saw her. Now, looking back, I look up to her so much for having to do that for us, so she could get a better job. I think that's where a lot of my drive came from (B.).

Others, particularly completers, hoped they were acting as role models for their children. In spite of the community or school experience children were having, parents hoped that the struggles they had gone through as adults in college encouraged their children to think about higher education earlier in their lives and, as one completer said, "Not make the mistakes I've made" (T.).

Teachers that interviewees had in K-12 grades also played a significant role in modeling behavior in their lives. When asked, everyone could still remember at least one important teacher they had had. Most of the teachers were in elementary school, were coaches, or had been writing teachers. In each case the teacher took the time to notice the individual's uniqueness and encouraged continuation in school. It was the coach who spent out-of-class time with the student, the band teacher who encouraged talent, the writing teacher who read and encouraged creativity the elementary teacher who covered a small personal financial loss--these were the people who were remembered. As one interviewee put it:

> If you had a problem he'd always be there. If you were late to class and needed a pass, he gave you one. He was just so cool. He was always there (J.).

You're going to be white, it's going to be a white world

According to data collected in this study, regardless of the age or the era in which the students grew up, there was an overt or covert message in the home that it was not okay to grow up Indian. Children were discouraged from going out to the reservation to play with their Indian cousins. Interviewees could recall times as children playing with Indian relatives, seeing adults beading, participating in ricing, but these were isolated incidents and were not discussed. The old language (Ojibwe) was not something the children should listen to when adults were talking:

> I remember my grandma telling us and they tried so hard to have us raised white. Any time there was something going on she would say you kids need to not listen to this because you're going to be white. It's going to be a white world (K.).

As a result of the discouragement to explore one's American Indian heritage, many of the interviewees were confused about their background or knew very little about their Indian relatives. Two of the participants were motivated, for the first time, about the possibility of exploring their Indian heritage during the interviews, almost as if a light bulb went off in their minds. Four participants had their desire first awakened to explore their Indian heritage during classes they took at the tribal college. Seven participants had struggled with living in two worlds (a white world and an Indian world) for a long time.

> After the enrollment, I went through what I call an identity crisis. I would go to the powwows and when they'd have open dancing, I'd get out here and dance. I was all set to make a jingle dress. But there's no way I would ever fit in. Period. I just knew I wouldn't. My skin is too light. I would have been compromising. It would have been a conflict with where my beliefs were because I was raised white (S.).

The following examples in Table 8 are the voices of the interviewees and represent the six subcategories discussed in family factors.

Table 8: Family Factors

Theme:	Comment:
Poverty as a way of life (Poverty)	• "I told her you came home and you had hot food on the table. You had milk. We had to scrounge for supper some nights and make what we could. You can't even begin to understand when you come from a world of milk and cookies after school [that we had] nothing, [but] making mustard or onion sandwiches" (K.)

Alcohol and chaos
(Alcohol)

- "If you're in an alcoholic relationship the alcohol loses control if you get out. I knew he needed money. He was an alcoholic and I didn't want to live like that, so I worked and went to work every day, even though he would hide my [car] keys [to prevent me going to work]" (K.).

Teenage pregnancy and the gaps that follow
(Teenage pregnancy)

- "I quit school and had my first child at seventeen. [I] got married and had an awful marriage. Ended up having two kids by the time I was 19. By the time I was 21, I was a widow with two kids" (H.)

I don't know how to help you in school
(Support for education)

- "[My parents wanted me to] get through school and try to get into college so I could make good for myself" (W.)

Encouragement by example
(Role models)

- "You could talk to him about anything. If you were upset or crying, he would help you out. And if you did bad, he always made you feel like you did good" (J.).

You're going to white. It's going To be a white world.
(Growing up as an American Indian)

- "With my own kids, I want them to have a broader sense. I don't want them to get stuck on the reservation and not go past that. [I want] them to realize that they can get out and see some of the world and participate in it" (K.)

Individual Factors

There were four subcategories that emerged from the data analysis that related to individual factors that influenced American Indian students in their completion and noncompletion. They were: (1) self-esteem, (2) influence of the early (K-12) school years, (3) motivation, and (4) complications as a nontraditional-age student.

I felt like I was accomplishing something

The idea of going to college enhanced the self-esteem of all the interviewees, whether they were completers or noncompleters. The pursuit of knowledge was a valuable goal that everyone wanted. The nontraditional-age students were more likely to say they were pursuing the degree for their own personal fulfillment while the younger students wanted the education to get a job, to have a better paying job, or to have more flexibility in employment. As one participant said:

> It's like being a rosebud that's been laying dormant. Closed, almost moldy, just rotting away and stuck in a field by itself....it's the education and knowing that I fell on my face many times and I'm still not in a cardboard box under some street lamp. Every class I took it's more and more that petal is opening up. I just felt so much more alive. For me who couldn't write a sentence...now I'm tutoring kids (K.).

The early years

Completers and noncompleters alike in this study did not have fond memories of their early years of schooling from kindergarten through high school. Two of the completers and five of the noncompleters and had difficulty keeping up, felt they were

slow readers, were teased, and didn't have memories of being particularly good students. Eleven of the 13 participants had a clear sense of what learning style was best for them, often a combination of hands-on, explanations, and demonstrations. This would indicate that it would have been beneficial to the students to be in small classes and have more individual attention. Only two of the participants, one completer and one noncompleter, said they were involved in Indian education activities in their school, which would have afforded them more individual attention (M. & X.). One completer who became involved in Indian education in high school found it a very positive experience (M.), while another in the study, a non-completer, felt those experiences "singled them out" (X.).

Four out of the seven completers and four out of six noncompleters said they moved often, switched schools, or had high absenteeism so they never really had a chance to make friends or have a consistent school life. The two participants who felt their early years were positive were completers, had been good students and were able to make it in spite of "being Indian" or were not identified as Indian. Seven of the 13 students interviewed did not complete high school on time.

My heart just wasn't in it

Although most everyone gets off the path to their goals at some point in their lives, a theme that emerged in this study was those who had a clear goal and had all the pieces in place to accomplish that goal were more likely to stay on track than those who did not. Six of the seven completers had very clear goals when they were at the tribal college, and they completed those goals and graduated, in spite of multiple issues going on in their lives while they were in school. They were single mothers, working part or full-time, and had transportation, relationship, and/or financial issues. Five of the six

noncompleters did not express clear goals while at the tribal college. As one non-completer who was motivated and knew she wanted a degree to have a better paying job said to me:

> It's just me and my personal life that happens is why I never finished [school]. That's what I think. Maybe my heart just wasn't set at really putting it towards school at all (H.).

Often completers had the same stresses in their lives as did noncompleters, but completers had a different support system. One single mother had her children in Head Start while she was in class (B.). Another had her mother take care of the children (X.). Another completer talked about trying to go to college at a younger age when he had a drinking problem and it just didn't work. Now he has grandchildren to raise and has completed his associate of applied science (AAS) degree. He loves school and feels its all about setting priorities. He explained:

> If you don't start a goal, you don't get nowhere. I set my goal from Day 1 and when I started here because I talked to my advisor. We made my plans right there, so I know what I was doing. You have to stick to you goals. I was a chemical abuser all my life and I knew I could help. I know I can help. I'm working with my heart (E.).

I had been out of school for 20 years

Eleven of the participants, six completers and five noncompleters, were nontraditional-age college students. An emerging theme in this study was that American Indians who go to school as nontraditional-age students have a lot of barriers to overcome. As previously discussed, most participants in this study did not have a

positive experience in school when they were in the K-12 system. Six of the participants had unsuccessfully attended a variety of other postsecondary schools before attending the tribal college. Ten of the 13 participants were raising children, grandchildren, or were foster parents while attending the tribal college. Ten participants had full-time jobs while in school. Many are also involved in the community. As a group, the data indicated that those participants who had previous college experience and were older students were more goal oriented and completed their education at the tribal college more than those who were younger and had less postsecondary experience. As one completer said:

> It was BIG for me because I had been out of school for 20 years. The idea of going back into the education system and sitting back in a classroom was actually very terrifying for me. I was nervous about being a nontraditional student and suddenly being thrust into an environment of people much younger than me, so it was very scary (M.).

By the time these nontraditional-age students became involved in college they already had very full lives. Yet they hungered for learning, mostly for their own satisfaction. Some were pursuing the degree for advanced placement in their current job site, or for flexibility for other job opportunities. As one student put it, " I work 40 hours a week, attend classes two nights a week, and by then end of the week, I'm dead" (T.).

The following examples in Table 9 are the voices of the interviewees and represent the four subcategories discussed in individual factors.

Table 9: Individual Factors

Theme:	Comment:
I felt like I was accomplishing something (Self-esteem)	• "I felt like I was accomplishing something even though I wondered what I had gotten myself into at my late age" (H.)
The early years (The K-12 school years)	• "I don't really have any fond memories of school at all" (S.).
My heart just wasn't in it (Motivation)	• "Not that I'm not going to flounder or anything, but it's a personal issue with me where I just want to accomplish that goal" (H.)
I had been out of school for 20 years (nontraditional-age students)	• "And I wouldn't be the person I am today if I hadn't had all those experiences. I used to think if I just would have had my degree sooner, but I wouldn't have had been molded the way I am now had I had that degree sooner" (M.)

Factors that Enhance Completion

Based on the data collected in this study, the following are factors that enhance the completion of American Indian students in the tribal college.

Location

When the college is located close to or on the reservation, it is more likely that American Indians will attend. This is an enhancement to American Indian students because they are not interested in traveling long distances or far from home.

Culture

The tribal college should be been seen as a cultural center as well as a college. Within this environment, both Indian and non-Indian students can learn about the American Indian culture and enhance their understanding of the culture and each other. This is a major role of the tribal college in the community.

Support services

A one-stop shopping plan to meet all the support needs for American Indian students including superb customer service is essential to students' successful retention and completion. Support needs includes: admissions, registration, financial aid, counselors, disability services, advisors, and the business office. It is not uncommon for an American Indian student to disappear and never return the first month of school because one of these services did not meet the student's needs.

Financial aid

There exists additional opportunities and with them complications in financial aid services for American Indians. A well-informed financial aid officer who understands all possible funding sources for American Indians and can effectively direct students to those resources is invaluable to the enrollment and retention of Indian students.

Faculty

It is essential to have American Indian faculty teaching in a tribal college. In this role they serve to connect the college to the Indian community, serve as role models, and relate to American Indian students as no one else can. There are not enough American Indians serving as faculty members today. There must be an ongoing and relentless effort to increase qualified Indian faculty members and staff. In lieu of American Indian faculty, an extensive program to increase cultural awareness is needed for faculty and staff to promote and encourage culturally relevant instruction and support services.

Expanded programs

The increase and expansion of evening classes (with child care), interactive television courses, and web site courses are essential to meet the needs of nontraditional students and full-time employed students.

Expanded outreach

Due to the high incidence of poverty, single parenting, and underpreparedness for higher education in the American Indian population, the tribal college should be vigilant in addressing the needs these conditions create in order to promote the attendance and retention of American Indian students in college. An effective and affordable system of transportation, housing, and adequate child care for all underaged children could address many of the key issues that prevent consistent attendance.

Advisors

An overriding issue for the majority of American Indian students who enter the tribal college is a lack of self-esteem, based on previous school and personal life experiences. These issues should be addressed aggressively to retain students. Training

more faculty as advisors and expanding their advising role could dramatically affect the awareness of student needs and improve the earlier intervention to meet student needs.

Summary

Internal and External Societal Conflicts

There are both internal and external societal conflicts that impact American Indians. These conflicts come from both the American Indian community and the dominant community. The pressure from one's own community may be the "crabs in a bucket" story (when one Indian tries to get out of the community, others pull him back "down"). The pressure from the dominant community may be in the form of overt or covert racism. In either case, the societal factors that impact educational success begin at an early age and can have a significant affect on completion and noncompletion in higher education.

Organizational Factors

The key organizational factors in the tribal college that affected the completion of students were: the accessibility meaning it was close to home and inexpensive; the cultural aspects of the campus, including the mix Indian and non-Indian faculty and students, and the inviting environment; and proactive support services that are attune to the unique needs of American Indian students and can meet those needs in a timely manner. Organizational factors that prohibited the completion of students included transportation and a full range of support services, including child care, for evening classes.

Institutional Factors

The institutional factors at the tribal college that affected students most were those related to faculty, staff, culturally relevant instruction, and planning for nontraditional-age learners. Students felt the flexible, accommodating, and supportive style of faculty plus the use of alternative styles of teaching (other than lecture) made the learning environment unique and positive. Staff members were often compared to the staff from other colleges that students had attended and were described as much more student oriented and customer friendly. Students felt they developed a deeper cultural understanding of themselves and their heritage from the relevant instruction, activities, and environment at the tribal college. Many of those interviewed had been nontraditional-age students. They were employed full-time and had families. They were very directed in their goals and were less interested in any extracurricular activities at the tribal college, although they appreciated them. What they valued most was flexible programming and expanded evening courses as well as evening support services. Evening programming was an area that nontraditional-age students in particular felt needed improvement at the tribal college.

Poverty

Poverty is an all encompassing aspect of American Indian family life. Integrated in the cycle of poverty is alcohol abuse, other forms of abuse, teen pregnancy, and the family's lack of support for education. Thus family life, whether family of origin or current family life, affected all the interviewees in their efforts to complete school. Interestingly, regardless of poverty or abuse in the family, most families encouraged their children to complete high school; however, family members often did not have the

knowledge of what supports to provide to facilitate that process. Students spoke of role models. Parents, whether negative or positive, were the most influential role models in the students' lives. Secondarily, teachers in the K-12 system were also mentioned as important role models. Those most often remembered were those who took the time to notice and encourage students. Regardless of the age or the era in which the students grew up, there was an overt or covert message in the family that is was not okay to grow up Indian. As a result, many of those interviewed had either denied their heritage for a long time or were confused by "living in two worlds." Many found the tribal college a safe arena in which to explore and gain better understanding of their heritage.

Self-esteem

The idea of going to college enhanced the self-esteem of all the interviewees, whether they were completers or noncompleters. Most of those interviewed did not have fond memories of their K -12 years in school. Many could easily identify how they learned best and often this was in a style that required more individual attention and support, which was not available to them for one reason or another. Many moved or changed schools often during these years so they had little opportunity to establish trusting relationships with teachers or peers.

Clear Goals

Although everyone looses sight of their goals from time to time, those who had a clear goal and had all the pieces in place to accomplish their goals were more likely to keep on track than those who did not. Nontraditional-age students were often more motivated and more goal oriented, having attended postsecondary schools unsuccessfully earlier in their lives.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently, little is known about societal, organizational, institutional, family, and individual factors that influence noncompletion rates among American Indian students enrolled in tribal colleges. The purpose of this study was to explore these factors associated with American Indian students' completion and noncompletion in one tribal college in northern Minnesota.

Links are made in this chapter to societal, organizational, institutional, program, family, and individual factors based on the findings of current literature and this study. Where findings mesh with the literature, references are made to the literature in the discussion of the findings. Implications are presented here for policy makers, administrators of postsecondary institutions, administrators of secondary institutions, families, and individuals. In addition, suggestions are made for further research to support the body of knowledge about the success of American Indian students in higher education.

Conflict

American Indian students who attend higher education face both internal and external conflicts (Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Melchior-Walsh, 1994). This conflict has been described as the "crabs in a bucket" analogy by a student interviewed by Cleary and Peacock (1998):

> If you normally catch a whole box of crabs, they will struggle to get out. That's how crabs function. Most of them will eventually all get out of the bucket. With

Indian crabs, the first crab starts to get out, and all the others grab its legs, and pull it back down so the first crab cannot escape.

Many in the American Indian community have a history of oppression, discrimination, and abuse by the majority culture (Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Garrod & Larimore, 1997; Melchior-Walsh,1994). Those interviewed expressed this through stories of their experiences with covert and overt racism at an early age in communities off the reservation and in their public school experiences. As a result, many of those interviewed told of how their parents and grandparents kept them from involvement in the Indian community as a means of protecting them from the racism the parents and grandparents had experienced in their lives, believing that it was best for their children to be acculturated in the dominant community. As Cleary and Peacock (1998) put it, "some progressives believe that the only way to solve community and educational problems is to take what is good from the mainstream society and move on."

However, several of those interviewed felt a desire to find a balance between their Indian culture and the dominate culture, to learn to walk in both worlds, and to find value for themselves from both (Fallows, 1987; Garrod & Larimore, 1997; James, 1992; Scott, 1986; Wenzlaf & Biewer, 1996). It is the researcher's interpretation that those interviewees who were able to find a balance appeared to be the students who were more successful in their postsecondary pursuits. Completers were better able to draw upon their internal resilience, had a stronger self-esteem, and were more goal completion-oriented (Attachment N). Although completers experienced the same community and societal pressures--i.e.,physical and emotional abuse, racism, poverty, crabs in a bucket, and alcoholism--as noncompleters, they were less likely to be dissuaded by these factors.

Noncompleters had less resiliency, lower self-esteem and a lack of goal orientation. As a result, they were more likely to succumb to these negative factors (Attachment O).

Organizational Factors

As Hossler (1984) stated, each institution should study its campus environment to identify those strategies that enhance retention. There were several organizational factors that made the tribal college a good fit for the interviewees. First of all, the accessible location was of primary value to the students. The close -to-home atmosphere gave the interviewees a sense of familiarity and helped them feel more comfortable about the college. This factor is also mentioned in the literature as one of the most positive features of tribal colleges (Boyer, 1997; Tijerina & Biemer, 1987-88). In addition, cultural aspects of the tribal college were very important to those interviewed in this study and are supported in the literature as essential to the retention of American Indian students (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990; Boyer, 1997; Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998). Interviewees talked about feeling a sense of belonging when they saw the American Indian art and artifacts hanging on the walls of the college as they entered.

Rendon (1994) and Smith (1989) reported that minority students come to college with many needs, and this is certainly true of American Indian students, as reported in the interviews. Support services offered at the tribal college were crucial to those students interviewed. Whether it was tutoring, advisement, child care, transportation, or financial aid, most all of the students interviewed depended heavily on services while at the tribal college. This is strongly supported in the literature as well (Alfred, 1983; Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990; Congos & Schoeps, 1997, 1998; Eaton & Bean, 1995; Creamer,

1980; Fidler, 1991; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1986 & 1984; Seidman, 1989& 1992; Tinto, 1993).

Interviewees of nontraditional-age were less likely to be involved in extracurricular activities. While extracurricular activities promoted a sense of belonging (Lenning et al., 1980; Tomlinson & Cope, 1988), and although the nontraditional-age students appreciated the existence of cultural activities, students had no extra time to participate. In the tribal college setting, these students found most of their sense of community and belonging, either with a cohort of students or in interactions with faculty (Tinto & Love, 1995; Tinto et al., 1994). Some also developed a strong bond with particular tribal college staff who were especially supportive and helpful, such as those working in student services. As Cleary and Peacock (1998) described, "many students can build feelings of competence by working within a group situation. This builds on the strength in collaboration that many American Indian students have." Nontraditional students often found their sense of community in their relationships with faculty members (Bean & Vesper, 1994; Bean, 1982; Dehyle, 1992; Endo & Harpel, 1982; Pascarella, 1996; Tinto, 1993; Seidman, 1991).

Some students interviewed felt they did not get enough support from the tribal college. The nontraditional-age students, felt there was a lack of support including adequate counseling into program areas and support services for evening classes. These services are crucial. As reported by Farbaugh-Dorkins (1991), nontraditional-age students with significant academic adjustment problems do not persist in higher education. Students expressed a need for expanded evening class offerings combined

with the availability of extensive support services such as child care, transportation, and tutoring services.

Financial aid was a big issue for all students interviewed. The availability of funding made attending college a viable option for individuals to consider. Without financial aid, students would not be able to attend tribal college (Mingle, 1987; Pottinger, 1990; St. John & Noell, 1989; Seidman, 1992; Wright, 1991). Those students who had easy access to educational funding through their tribes had the least amount of stress in their financial planning. Those students who did not have proof of tribal affiliation, who had outstanding loans from previous college attendance, or who did not qualify for funding were not able to attend college on a regular basis.

Institutional Factors

Overwhelmingly those interviewed, whether completers or noncompleters, felt faculty members and staff were flexible, accommodating, and supportive. Students found it easier to relate to and learn from Indian faculty (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990; Boyer, 1997; Brown, 1995; Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Osborne & Cranney, 1985; Scott, 1986; Tijerina & Biemer, 1987-88). Indian faculty members were easier to talk to, could relate to the issues interviewees were facing academically and personally, and added humor and culture to academics. Guyette and Heth (1984) referred to minority-faculty members on campus as a "retention tool." Perhaps this is so valuable to the students, because, as Cleary and Peacock (1998) stated, "the American Indian teachers raised in traditional environments provided the best examples of those successfully finding balance between both worlds." Students also related well to non-Indian teachers at the tribal college who had the ability to work well with diversity (Astone & Nunez-Wormack,

1990; Cahape & Howley, 1992; Indian Nation as At Risk Task Force, 1991; Osborne & Cranney, 1985; Rendon, 1994; Reyhner, 1993; Steward, 1993; Terenzini, et al., 1993).

Teachers who made their instruction culturally relevant helped the students learn more about themselves and their culture thus developing an overall deeper cultural understanding. Interviewees felt this was a strong attribute of the tribal college (Van Hamme, 1995). In reference to American Indian faculty members and their cultural instructional style, Cleary and Peacock (1998) wrote:

> Somewhere along their educational journey, they discovered they could not have balance in their own lives without learning the American Indian part of their being. These teachers [and the instruction they give] are a true testament to the need to find harmony and balance to be whole.

Perhaps this explains the depth and meaning of the stories that were shared with the researcher about the instruction, the instructional style, and faculty members at the tribal college. Whether a completer or noncompleter, each interviewee felt a bond with the tribal college faculty and staff. Many of the benefits of having American Indian faculty and staff are intangible and hard to described however easily observed on-site at the tribal college. Interviewees told of the use of "Indian humor" in the classroom. For example, one teacher referred to gourmet recipes using "commods" (commodity foods) to illustrate budget strategies in a Personal Finance class. It was common for an Indian faculty member, when going through the class list for the first time, to make family associations between students on the class list and Indian family names. This made completers and noncompleters immediately feel welcome and included in the environment. Even the inflection and tone of voice an American Indian faculty member

used had a rhythm that provided a comfort level and common bond that helped relieve the stress of being in an academic setting.

Family Factors

Interviewees described six areas of family life that had significant impact on their lives: poverty; alcohol, teen pregnancy, support/or lack of for education, role models, and conflict associated with growing up Indian. These risk factors have been well documented (Cahape & Howley, 1992; Falk & Aitken, 1984; Guyette & Heth, 1984; Pavel, et al., 1998). The importance of immediate and extended family and tribal group support is also well documented in the literature (Atkinson et al.,1990; Bransford, 1982; Cahape & Howley, 1992; Deever, et al., 1974; Falk & Aitken, 1984; Garrod and Larimore, Heavy Runner & Morris, 1997; Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, 1991; Padilla, et al., 1997; Pavel & Padilla, 1993; Seidman, 1992; Tate & Schwartz, 1993; Wenzlaf & Biewer, 1996). A significant connection was discovered in the stories shared with the researcher. There was a significant correlation between the oppressive cycles of poverty tied to the ramifications of generations of that poverty such as alcoholism, lack of self-esteem, abuse, and teen pregnancy and the capacity for resilience and/or role modeling on the part of family members to support education for their children. Parents were clearly the most prominent role models of both negative and positive behaviors. Parent of completers took their role as a model seriously. Even though their lives were chaotic at times, these parents were able to adjust to life's changes in more positive ways, illustrating that resiliency to their children. Parents of noncompleters tended to have less resiliency to chaotic situations and tended to create even more chaos by their reactions to changing events e.g., alcohol, drug, or physical abuse.

It seems evident that the desire to encourage education for their children existed in the families of all interviewees, but there was a general lack of stability in the home as well as a lack of understanding how to actually offer the support needed for their children to maintain a balanced school life. Most often that lack of understanding followed those interviewed into their adult life, and the cycle of attrition in school continued. Those who were completers somehow had the resilience to get back on the path in spite of disruptions and achieve their goal. Most who were able to complete had established at some point more stability in their lives and had fewer distractions.

Regardless of the age or the era in which the students grew up, there was an overt and/or covert message in the home that is was not okay to grow up Indian. As Cleary and Peacock (1998) explained, "some of them [family members] came from the boarding school era and were programmed to believe American Indian people must forget their American Indian ways and become assimilated into the majority society." And, in fact, many believe that those American Indian students who are most successful in the majority (public) schools have the ability to manage in both American Indian and non-Indian worlds (Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Fallows, 1987; Garrod & Larimore, 1997; James, 1992; Richardson & Skinner, 1991; Scott, 1986; Wenzlaf & Biewer, 1996). In any case, those interviewed had to struggle with their cultural identity to one degree or another. Even those interviewed who were not aware of their Indian heritage at an early age were somewhere in the process of finding a balance of meaning about who they were culturally. Their experiences at the tribal college often either triggered or enhanced their personal cultural exploration. They felt one of the most valuable aspects of attending the tribal college was the opportunity to explore, learn, or become reacquainted with their

own culture in an environment that embraced such activity. This was a subtle yet nonetheless remarkable aspect of the tribal college experience for those in this study.

Individual Factors

The data analysis indicated that self-esteem, the influence of the early (K-12) school years, motivation, and complications as a nontraditional-age student were all factors of for individuals.

There are many factors that appear in the literature that relate to self-esteem in the education of minority students. Astin (1995) spoke of the underrepresentation of minority students as a factor in their self-esteem and completion. Even though interviewees were attending a tribal college, the majority of students and faculty members were non-Indian, and this did have an affect on students. As Richardson et al.(1987) found, on campuses where there is a 20-25% participation level of a minority group, a "comfort zone" is reached by those students. Students at the tribal college agreed and felt much more "at home" than they had at other previously attended colleges.

Many of those interviewed talked about how good it made them feel about themselves, just to be attending college. The very act of deciding to attend college and actually attending boosted self-esteem. This was true, even for those who dropped out after a short time. As Pelavin and Kane (1990) reported in their research, aspirations are as important as attendance. The desire and motivation that come from feeling good about oneself can carry a student through the difficult times. However, in this study, positive self-esteem alone was not enough to retain students who did not have other components in place, such as child care, transportation, funding, and work schedules.

Although few students interviewed had positive experiences in their elementary and secondary school years (K-12), many did develop a clear sense of their learning style. There is no one single American Indian learning style (Indian Nations At Risk Task Force, 1991), but there is a common consensus of the importance of knowing individual learning styles, especially with minority students. There is some evidence for hands-on learning which would indicate the need for students to find some personal and practical applications of school work to their daily lives (Cleary & Peacock, 1998). This was borne out in the interviews repeatedly, whether interviewees were referring to meaningful teachers or instruction they had, the learning meant more to them when it had relevance. One factor that often negatively impacted students in their early years was the frequency with which they changed schools, affecting their relationships with peers, teachers, and the school environment as a whole.

Motivation is a very complicated aspect of completion of goals. As one tribal college Indian faculty member said, "We all get off the path to our goals at some point in our lives. That does not make us noncompleters." This was true in many of the interviews. Several of the completers as well as the noncompleters had started and dropped out many times during their college experiences. Some of them were at a "stop out point" during the time of the interviews meaning that they had stopped their college for the time. All had intentions of completing eventually. All had life issues that prevented them from going straight through to degree completion. Issues such as transportation, work demands, family demands, child care, and social demands are all well documented in the literature (Seidman, 1992; and St. John & Noell, 1989). However, some had clearer goals, a clearer sense of how to reach those goals, and a more

stable support system to help in the process. Positive external factors are common attributes to retention in the literature (Noel et al.,1986; Padilla, 1998; Richardson et al., 1987; Schwartz, 1989; Seidman, 1992).

As was the case with nontraditional-age students, there were also many external and internal barriers to prevent the completion of goals. Many had been in several postsecondary schools prior to their attendance at the tribal college. Several spoke of their desire to complete their degrees as a personal goal which compared to the research done by Lenning et al.(1980). Others spoke of the cultural identity and spiritual value that brought them to the tribal college (American Indian Rehabilitation Programs Unmet Needs, 1996; Bold Warrior, 1992; Castillo, 1982; Garrod & Larimore, 1997; Heavy Runner & Morris, 1997; Huffman, Sills, & Brokenleg in Browne & Evans, 1987; Lin, 1990; Ogbu in Pottinger, 1990; Swisher & Deyhle, 1987; Wenzlaf & Biewer, 1996). Those nontraditional-age students who were employed fulltime were more successful in the completion of their postsecondary goals than those who were parttime or unemployed. The students who were employed fulltime had more stable home environments and were more set on their goals of completion, perhaps because they had started and stopped previously. They had less of a need for social integration on campus because they had a sense of community elsewhere. However, they did respond very positively to the American Indian faculty, the cultural environment, and the inclusion of American Indian values and beliefs in the curriculum.

Implications

It is impossible to consider the implications of this study without emphasizing the importance of the historical educational experiences of American Indians. The cultural

genocide (WhiteShield, 2000) experienced by all American Indian cultures has lead to a sense of oppression that has been carried down through many generations. The after affects on a group of people who have been stripped so completely of their traditions, language, and culture, called Historical Trauma Response (HTR), has had a dramatic and unique impact on the American Indian educational experience. The HTR experience is an example of the unique conflict that affects all factors in this study: the societal, institutional, organizational, family, and individuals.

Based on the findings from this study there are several implications for policy makers, administrators of postsecondary institutions, administrators of secondary institutions, families, and individuals. There are also implications for future research.

Policymakers

One of the policies that affects American Indians and their participation and completion of postsecondary education relates to financial aid. Policymakers at all levels--i.e., federal, state, and tribal--could alleviate this dilemma by providing consistent long-term funding to American Indian students to complete their education. Studies have shown that American Indian students take longer to complete college; financial aid systems, if they are to be truly helpful, should accommodate these students. Often, at the federal and state levels, scholarships and funding are directed to American Indians entering engineering or computer science. At levels of four-year and beyond education there few American Indians at all levels requiring four-year degrees and beyond that there must be broader emphasis placed on the support services needs for American Indians all areas of higher education.

At the tribal level, funding for higher education is often on a first-come, first-serve basis until funding is depleted. Because of the increased revenue afforded many tribes by the gaming industry, tribal councils now have the opportunity to expand the system of financial aid for education. By marketing higher education to the community and publicly valuing and respecting those who succeed, tribal council members can show they recognize the importance of higher education. Further, tribal council members can also prove that well-educated tribal members are valued by creating work schedules at the casinos that promote and reward attendance and completion at the tribal college. Tribal council members can support the creation of opportunities for individuals to come back to their reservations and work after they have completed their college degrees. By using gaming profits to build the infrastructure on reservations (through small business loans, etc.) there could be businesses, jobs, transportation systems, youth programming, and well established K-12 Bureau of Indian Affairs--i.e.,BIA--schools. This would entice well-educated community members to come back after college, live in the community, reinvest in their communities, and continue to build the infrastructure, thereby enhancing the quality of life for all on the reservation.

It is extremely important that tribal councils take the lead in having a proactive role--along with BIA schools, Head Start programs, and Indian mental health programs -- in assisting families to support each other. Tribal councils can support the timeless traditions of listening to the elders and going back to cultural roots of education for American Indians. Tribal councils can address the following questions: Why is education important? How as it implied and transmitted to youth? The core value of education must be reestablished within the community itself.

Policymakers can also, on a broader scale, promote education by developing programs that actively promote the education of Indian youth on the reservation. Community-sponsored education such as graduation award ceremonies held during powwows, gatherings, and feasts promote the value of education. Ceremonies that celebrate and reward youth and adults who complete any of the stages of educational transition--e.g.,Head Start, kindergarten, grade school, middle school, high school, college, graduate programs --promote community and individual pride in educational achievements. On a more individual level, tribal members, especially elders, should gather and develop their own community activities and strategies to promote the education of their youth from a cultural perspective.

Administrators of postsecondary institutions

We cannot assume that all American Indians are alike or will need the same services in college. However, based on the findings of this study, it is clear that some steps can be taken at postsecondary institutions to provide certain essential supports that will promote the likelihood of successful completion for American Indian students. Attending and completing college is still a rather new phenomenon for the vast majority in American Indian communities. Therefore the postsecondary environment is a relatively new arena for American Indian individuals, families, and communities.

Administrators in higher education must realize this and provide institutional supports for the unique academic, cultural, and social needs that most often occur. Recruiters from tribal colleges must be American Indians who are familiar with the community surrounding the tribal college and who are not afraid to go to wherever American Indians congregate (homes, community centers, tribal centers, American

Indian businesses, casino staff lunchrooms, and high schools) to recruit students. Tribal college alumni as recruiters can have a very positive impact. This initial contact from an Indian from the tribal college allows potential recruits know that this is a place where they can go to college and where there are other people like themselves with whom to relate and feel comfortable. When they enter college, having an Indian upper classman act as mentor can help bridge the gap from home to college community.

The development of cultural centers, clubs, learning resource centers, and meeting areas provides a safe and comfortable place for students to be together and receive natural supports from each other. Making a concerted effort to hire qualified American Indian faculty and staff will promote a welcoming atmosphere as well as natural role models for students. Encouraging faculty and staff to be accessible to students on an individual basis promotes one-on-one interaction that is less confrontational than in-class questions and is more supportive to American Indian students. Promoting a learning environment where oral language traditions and other cultural instructional techniques are taught and fostered within the context of the curriculum will create a more positive learning environment.

It is a mistake to assume that the high percentage of the faculty members at tribal colleges are Indian or that those who are American Indian have a clear sense of their heritage and how to relate that knowledge to instructional techniques. Therefore, in order to promote learning environments that promote learning from a cultural perspective, faculty members need training and support. Administrators should make this type of training a priority for faculty inservices at tribal colleges.

Additional programming that provides early skill development and preparation for the rigors of college, such as freshman year experience programs or summer orientation

programs should, be a high priority in program development at tribal colleges. Programs such as these provide students with early access to registration, faculty, financial aid, physical orientation to the campus, study skills development, problem solving activities, and the opportunity to develop study/support groups. This is an excellent time to introduce and partner entering freshman with an upper-class mentor. These types of programs have been seen documented in the literature as essential to support student success.

Administrators of secondary institutions

Based on the current literature and the findings of this study we know that most American Indian college students come unprepared to college. The majority of those interviewed related a basic lack of involvement or enjoyment in their K-12 years in school. There was most often a lack of connection between the Indian students' "real" life and their "school" life. Their basic academic skills and ability to problem solve was lacking. Basic study strategy techniques were often non-existent. Even Indian students who do not enter college until later--e.g., in their 20s or 30s--are lacking in these basic areas necessary for entering college students.

Secondary school administrators should begin to take this missing connection more seriously. Indian students in K-12 schools, especially at the high school level, need many of the same supports that college students require to be successful. However, because these students are younger, it is essential that programming for their unique social, emotional, and cultural needs is done in collaboration with community and family members. This programming should include not only individualized approaches for meeting the academic needs but also a plan for meeting the transition needs of American

Indian high school student as they begin to plan for life after high school. Assigning specific Indian staff in the high schools to address these needs is crucial.

Bringing community members, family members, and positive American Indian role models into the school to share the importance of education offers benefits to all involved. Bringing these groups together at school closes the gap between both the community and the school and the family and the school. It helps students connect their community life with their school life. Such activities also support community members in feeling more a part of the schooling of their children and perhaps alleviates some of their historical fears and stereotypes about public schooling.

Providing concentrated culturally based summer programs that specifically address the skills needed to prepare high school students for college is an example of the extra support needed. Exposing high school and younger Indian students to college campus visits, career day activities, job shadowing experiences, and career mentors broadens the students' realm of understanding about postsecondary school options.

Educating high school counselors about the opportunities for Indian youth by connecting them to Indian staff, community members, tribal college faculty and staff, and tribal financial aid opportunities helps pave the way for Indian students to attend college. Counselors can be enormously supportive in helping Indian students and their families learn about and believe in the possibility of higher education for Indian youth. However students must first believe it themselves.

Implications for Future Research

There are several potential areas of future research that focus on why American Indian students complete and do not complete their higher education goals. Continued

studies on the implications of internalized oppression in American Indians can help educators better address the needs of students. These studies could also help Indian students learn to understand themselves more fully and can support students in their self-exploration and discovery. Continued explorations about external oppression and the struggles for balance between tradition culture American Indian culture and the various levels of assimilation American Indians face would be useful. Studies about resilience of Indians could help families and Indian family programs support each other. Further study on the success rate of American Indians who wait until later in life to attend college--e.g., in their 20s and 30s--would be useful in expanding our knowledge of transition for American Indian students in and out of high school. Studies on the impact of various strategies such as ethnic center, ethnic courses, outreach and bridge programs, peer mentors, and role models would help administrators know more about effective retention strategies. Studies that specifically explore the retention of students whose family members have been actively included in college transition and adjustment activities would also shed light on possible support models. Finally, additional study on the relationships of various success rates of students in all tribal colleges, to age, gender, program area, and level of academic preparedness could assist strategic planning efforts, not only for individual colleges, but also for AIHEC, AICF, and other government agencies.

Summary

Factors in society, organizations, institutions, families, and the individual that are related to students' completion and noncompletion in tribal college are very complex. Within each factor are a myriad of issues, based on the complexities of each individual.

Completers and noncompleters in this study had the same outside issues affecting their lives. However, completers were less likely to be dissuaded from their goals by these issues than noncompleters. Completers had a stronger sense of resiliency that led to a greater of self-esteem and goal completion orientation than did the noncompleters (Attachment N and O).

In spite of previous research studies on American Indian students little has changed for these students. Fewer American Indians graduate from institutions of higher education than do any other minority group in this country. Few positive American Indian role models exist for young children or adults to emulate. "Crabs in a bucket" continues to be a complex example of internalized oppression resulting from a lack of family stability related to poverty, alcohol, abuse, teen pregnancy, and triangulation that occurs in the search for cultural identity. There is much more that must be explored in future research to address retention of American Indians in higher education. Hopefully other researchers will continue to address the important issues of retention and attrition of American Indians in higher education so that the conditions necessary for their success continue to improve.

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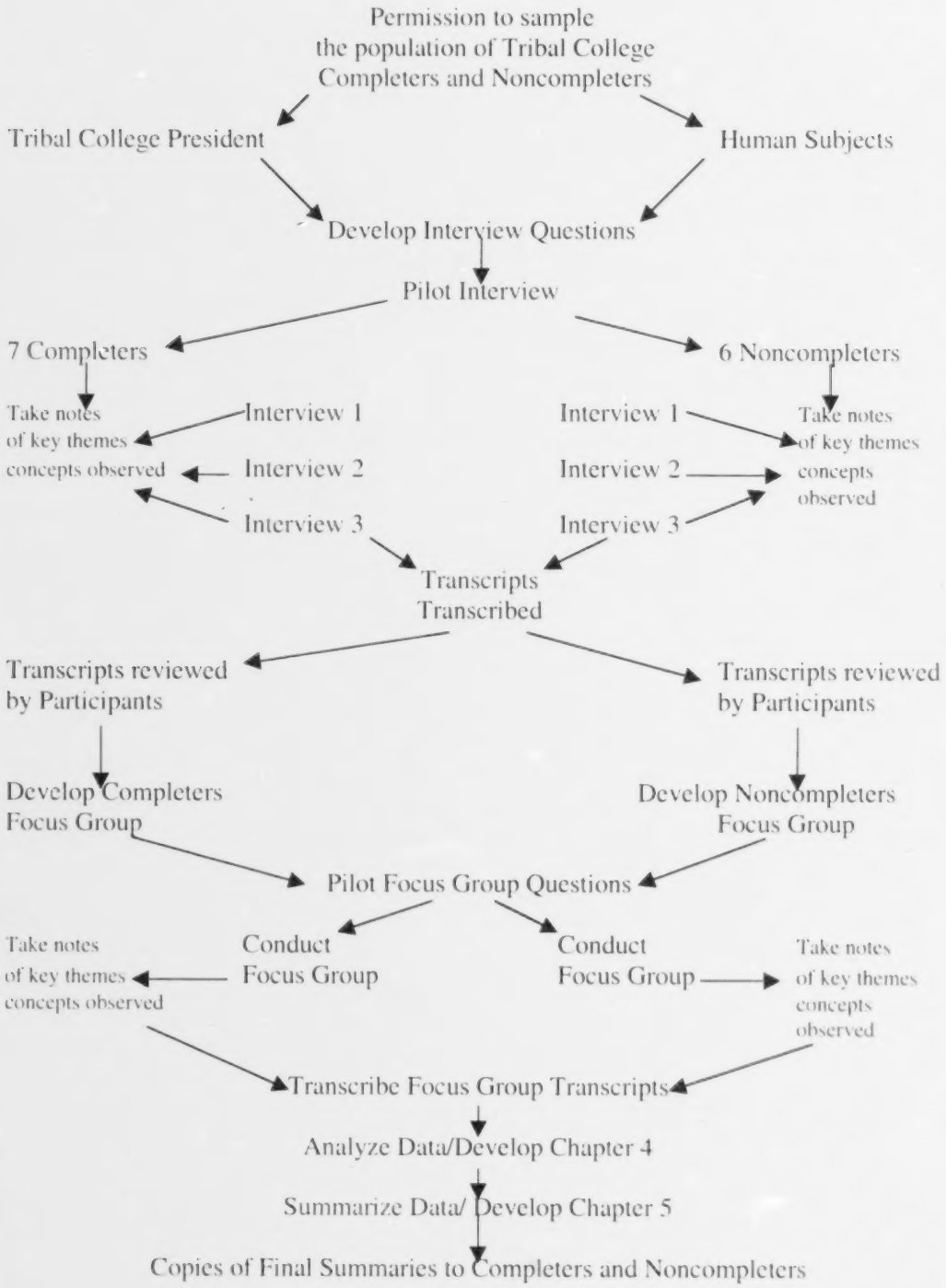
Attachment A

Data Collection/Analysis Diagram



Attachment B

Attachment C

Attachment D

September 30, 1999

Dear _____.

I have been working with many of your for four years. As some of you know, I am a graduate student at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus. As part of my graduate work, I will be conducting a study of former students who attended and completed (completers) or did not complete (noncompleters) their expected goals at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FdLTCC). This project has received the written approval of President Jack Briggs.

I am writing to ask you to help me by recommending American Indian students that you worked with in the 1997-98 or 1998-99 school years to be in a research study of American Indian students who attended FdLTCC.

The purpose of this study is to collect information from former students at FdLTCC which can be used to look at trends that either support or hinder the completion of American Indian students in a tribal college. I will be interviewing six completers and six noncompleters, six of whom are women and six of whom are men.

I have enclosed a copy of the consent form participants will complete if they agree to participate, for your information.

I will be contacting you for names of former students. Thank you in advance for you help. If you have any questions, please call me at 612-627-4179.

Sincerely,

Jean E. Ness
Graduate Student

Attachment E

September 30, 1999

Dear _____.

Your name has been given to me by faculty/staff at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FdLTCC) because you were a student in either the1997-98 school year or the1998-99 school year. I am a graduate student at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus. I have been working with the Fond du Lac Reservation for four years. I am writing to invite you to be in a research study of American Indian students who attended FdLTCC. You were recommended as a possible participant because you either completed or did not complete your goals at FdLTCC. I have enclosed a Consent Form. Please read it carefully, sign and return to me in the enclosed envelope if you are willing to participate.

The purpose of this study is to collect information from former students at FdLTCC which can be used to look at trends that either support or hinder the completion of American Indian students in a tribal college.

If you agree to be in this study, you will take part in three individual one hour interviews and one focus group. These will be audio-taped. The individual answers to your responses in the interviews will be shared with no one except you. Later I will ask you to review your written interview responses and make any corrections necessary.

Thank you for reading this information and considering taking part in this study. If you have any questions, please call me at 612-627-4179.

Sincerely,

Jean E. Ness
Graduate Student

Attachment F

CONSENT FORM
Former Student of Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
Consent Form

You are invited to be in a research study of students who attended Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FdLTCC) You were selected as a possible participant because you either completed or did not complete your goals at FdLTCC. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Jean E. Ness, a graduate students at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to collect information from former students at FdLTCC which can be used to look at trends that either support or hinder the completion of American Indian students in a tribal college.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will take part in three individual one hour interviews. These interviews will be audio-taped. Questions such as the following will be asked:

What has school been life for you since you first remember it? What has made school hard/easy for you throughout your life? Why did you go to FdLTCC? Did you reach the goals you set for yourself at FdLTCC? What are your future plans? What would make you successful/continue to make you successful in college in the future, should you decide to continue?

Copies of the interviews with you will be sent to you afterwards for your corrections and approval. We will then have a one hour focus group for all those who were individually interviewed. That discussion will revolve around the general themes that came out in the interviews. You are free to withdraw from the interview at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The study has the risks of possible invasion of privacy. There are no benefits or compensations. There will be a meal provided at the time that the focus groups are held for all participants.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only researchers will have access to the records. Audio-tapes will be transcribed by a professional and then erased.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Fond du Lac Tribal and community College or the University of Minnesota. You are free to withdraw at any time for whatever reason.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Jean E. Ness. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions you may contact Jean at 612-627-4179.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

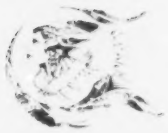
Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

Signature of Interviewer _____Date _____

Attachment G



BACKGROUND FORM

Please answer the following questions by filling in the information requested.

NAME: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Best phone number to reach you at: _____ **Best time:** _____

Please write the name and phone number of someone who can always reach you:

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

What is your birth date? _____

When did you attend FdLTCC? _____

How many credits did you complete at FdLTCC? _____

What are you doing now (employed? In school? At home?, etc.) _____

_____

If working, is the work related to the coursework you took at FdLTCC? _____

If in school, are you taking courses related to those you took at FdLTCC? _____

If I use a quote from you in the research report, instead of your real name, what made-up name would you like me to use? _____

Best time/s and days of the week for you to meet for interviews? _____

_____

Best location for you to meet for interviews? _____

THANK YOU !

Attachment H

Participant Profile

Completers:

E. is a sixty year old male who is enrolled member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. He has had a life long love of learning. He was raised by grandparents, in boarding schools, and foster care. He is a recovering alcoholic who divorced after 30 years of marriage. He has adopted and is raising two of his grandchildren. He earned an associate of applied science (AAS) degree in human services from a tribal college in 2000 and plans to be a counselor in the chemical dependency field.

B. is a 25 year old male who did not know he was part Indian until he was 15 years old. He has Indian roots from the Sault St. Marie Tribe in Michigan on his mother's side of the family. He completed an associate of arts (AA) degree at the tribal college in 1996. He has 4 credits remaining to complete his bachelor of arts (BA) degree at the university. He works at the Army National Guard and hopes to make the military his career. He has been married for three years to an occupational therapist. They have no children.

Z. is a 40 year old single mother with four children. She is an enrolled member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. She graduated with an associate of arts (AA) degree from the tribal college in 1997. She attended several postsecondary schools during her adult years before completing the AA degree. She is interested in pursuing a four year degree, but has defaulted college loans to pay off first. She is interested in a career such as social work where she can help people. She works part time as a teacher's aid in the public school system.

M. is a forty-six year old married woman who works full-time as the computer troubleshooter, technician, and telecommunications coordinator at the reservation health clinic. She is an enrolled member of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe. She received her associate of arts (AA) degree in 1997 from the tribal college. Prior to attending the tribal college she attended several other postsecondary schools but did not complete a degree. She has an adult son and a teenage stepson. She is currently pursuing a four year degree in management in a special evening program at a nearby private college.

R. is a forty-three year old married woman who is an enrolled member of the Bad River Band of Ojibwe in Wisconsin. She spent many years as a hair dresser in the metropolitan area but shortly after moving north to the reservation she enrolled in the tribal college. She earned her associate of arts (AA) degree in 1997. She immediately transferred to the university where she completed her bachelor of arts (BA) in communications and began a master's degree program. She is currently pursuing that degree while teaching at the university and the tribal college. She is a mother and a stepmother of children in their late teens.

T. is a thirty-three year old single mother of two school age children. She was adopted at birth by Caucasian parents and spent 20 years of her life unaware of her heritage. When her adoptive mother died, she learned about her birth mother, made contact, and moved back to the area. Although she was raised in a very racist family, she always knew she was Indian and has spent the last several years becoming reunited with her Indian relatives and her heritage. She was awarded her associate of arts (AA) degree from the tribal college in 1998. She has continued to take Ojibwe language and culture classes at the tribal college and intends on pursuing her four-year degree when her children are older. She works in human resources on the reservation.

X. is a twenty-one year old single mother with two preschool age children. She does not associate with the Indian culture but as someone who is enrolled in the Bad River Band of Wisconsin. She was able to and accessed Indian funding for college. She received her associate of applied science (AAS) in human services in 1998. She worked in that field for a short time and now is pursuing a degree as a medical technician in a private business college.

Noncompleters:

H. is a twenty-four year old married mother of two preschool/grade school age children. She is an enrolled member of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe. She is a medical assistant in an Indian clinic. She received her training from a private business school. She went to the tribal college to take general education courses to apply toward a registered nursing degree. She did not attend long before dropping out because the schedule was more than she could handle with a full-time job and two children. She hopes to return to the tribal college someday when her children are older.

J. is a twenty-eight year old single woman, with no children living with her parents. She works full-time at the casino. J. tried attending the tribal college twice. Both times she did quite well and enjoyed school far more than she did in high school. Her problem in funding. She is not an enrolled member of an Indian tribe and has no records to qualify her for Indian funding. Although she is not a dependent, her parents make too much money and she does not qualify for any financial aid. So she attends classes on the "pay as you go" plan. She has just started at the tribal college again and intends to complete this time.

K. is a fifty-two year old divorced mother of adult children. She is an enrolled member of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. She grew up doing and knowing about her culture, but was discouraged from any involvement on the reservation. As a pregnant teen she became a high school drop-out. She received her graduate equivalency diploma (GED) secretly at the age of forty. She did not want her children to know she never graduated from high school. She worked in the local mill for many years. She took several classes from the tribal college when she was an employee of the reservation. She has also taken a course from time to tome on her own at the tribal

college. However, she has never completed her two-year degree. She hopes to complete her associate of arts degree eventually. She feels it would be personally very fulfilling and would complete a "chapter" in her life.

S. is a married woman with no children. She is an enrolled member of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe. Her experience at the tribal college was that of being an extension student, taking classes as they were offered to her in her work setting on the reservation. She enjoyed the classes combined with the relationship building with co-workers, but did not pursue a two-year degree at the tribal college. She has, however, taken courses at several postsecondary schools in the area and is currently pursuing a degree through an independent distance learning college program. She works with high school Indian youth encouraging them to complete high school and attend college.

H. is a thirty-eight year old single parent. Hope has started courses at the tribal college several times, but has not completed any courses. She wants to pursue a two-year degree, but has issues with alcohol and transportation that get in the way of her progress. One of the support systems she has tried is to attend college on, what she calls, the "buddy system" where her daughter and/or her boyfriend attend with her. Unfortunately, that system has not worked for them. She is currently employed at the community center working with youth. She feels she is very good at working with troubled youth and would like to pursue that field someday when her life is more stable.

W. is a twenty-two year old single mother with three pre-school/elementary school age children. She is an enrolled member of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. She completed her high school diploma after the birth of her son by traveling back to another reservation once a week to turn in school work at the Alternative Learning Center. She attended the tribal college for a short time. However, between issues with financial aid, child care and transportation along with conflicts with her Welfare-to-Work Program, she became overwhelmed and quit after about a month of classes. She hopes to return when her life is more stable.

Attachment I
Interview # 1
Background and Experiences

Information given by you today will be used to help improve the retention of American Indian students at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College and other tribal colleges in the nation. You are free to end this interview at any time, for whatever reason. In that case, no information given will be used. Also, you may, for whatever reason, refuse to answer certain questions.

What has school been like for you since you first remember it?

Please tell me one of the best experiences you remember ever having in school.
Please tell me one of the worst experiences you remember ever having in school.

In the past, how has school fit in with your home and community life?

Please tell me in what ways your community supported your schooling.
Please tell me in what ways your family supported your schooling.

As far back as you can remember, what did your family/community tell you about formal education? About learning as a way of life?

Do you think that you are too easy/hard on yourself?

What do you think some reasons for this are?

When you think about the teachers you have had throughout your educational experience, who/what comes to mind?

When you think of the school environment you have experienced in your life, who/what comes to mind?

What has made school hard/easy for you throughout your life/educational experience?

Was attendance s an issue? What were some reasons for this?
Was health an issue? What were some reasons for this?

Thank you for your participation. Can we set up a date for our second interview?

Attachment J
Interview # 2
Details of Experiences

Information given by you today will be used to help improve the retention of American Indian students at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College and other tribal colleges in the nation. You are free to end this interview at any time, for whatever reason. In that case, no information given will be used. Also, you may, for whatever reason, refuse to answer certain questions.

What was school like for you at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FdLTCC)?

Please tell me about you average school day when you were at FdLTCC.
Did you have friends?
Did you feel connected to school to activities at school?

Why did you go to FdLTCC?

Why were you in school? Why was school important to you?

When you were at FdLTCC, how did you feel about yourself?

What is a successful college student?

Was the college environment at FdLTCC supportive of your needs?

Financial/
Family/children?
Learning needs?
Cultural needs?

Did you reach the goal/s you set for yourself at FdLTCC?

What have you done since you left FdLTCC?

What do you most remember about your experience at FdLTCC?

What are your future plans?

Thank you for your participation. Can we set up a date for our third interview?

Attachment K
Interview # 3
Reflection on the Meaning

Information given by you today will be used to help improve the retention of American Indian students at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College and other tribal colleges in the nation. You are free to end this interview at any time, for whatever reason. In that case, no information given will be used. Also, you may, for whatever reason, refuse to answer certain questions.

How did the experience/s you had at FdLTCC bring you to where you are in your life today?

What kind of life did you expect for yourself when you left?
Have you had that kind of life? Why or why not?

Did your tribal college experience prepare you in a cultural way better for the future than before? It that important to you?

How would you like the tribal college experience to be different for your children?
For your grandchildren?

What part should the American Indian community have in the future decisions made about FdLTCC?

What part should society at large play in the future decisions made about FdLTCC?

When you think of your experiences at FdLTCC, what emotion comes to your mind that you want to keep and share with others?

What would make you successful/continue to make you successful in college in the future, should you decide to continue on?

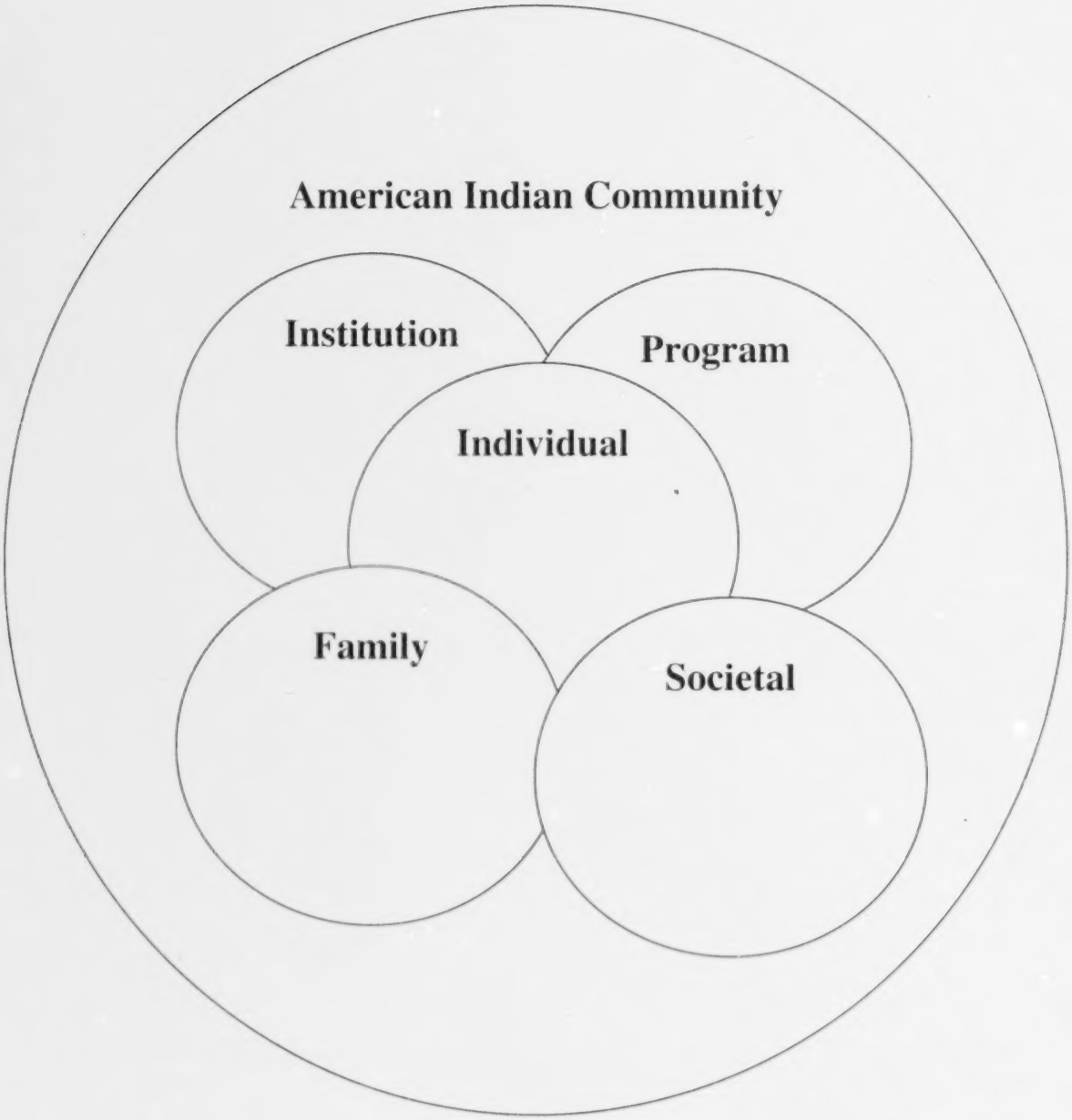
If you could have your experience at FdLTCC to live over again, how would you live it differently?

If your forefathers could speak to you today, what would they say about the future for American Indians in colleges?

Thank you for participating.

Attachment L

Data Analysis Themes:



Attachment M
Summary of Findings Matrix: Completers and Noncompleters in Tribal College The Ness Model

	Both Completers and Noncompleters	Completers Only	Noncompleters Only
Societal Factors			
	• Internal conflicts: Crabs in a bucket		
	• Effort to not "appear" Indian		
	• Struggle for balance: tradition vs. assimilation		
	• External conflict: More racism with more physical Indian characteristics	• Resiliency to withstand internal and external conflicts	• Denial of being Indian taught in and out of the community-leads to self-fulfilling prophecy/low self-esteem internalized oppression
Organizational Factors			
	• Accessible site: close to home	• Ask for support services when needed	• Require needs anticipated early on and met for them
	• Default loans from previous postsecondary experiences	• Financial aid needs in place at the start	• Financial aid needs not in place at the start
	• Need for evening child care on site		• Need for child care crucial on site
	• Tribal college		• Need for

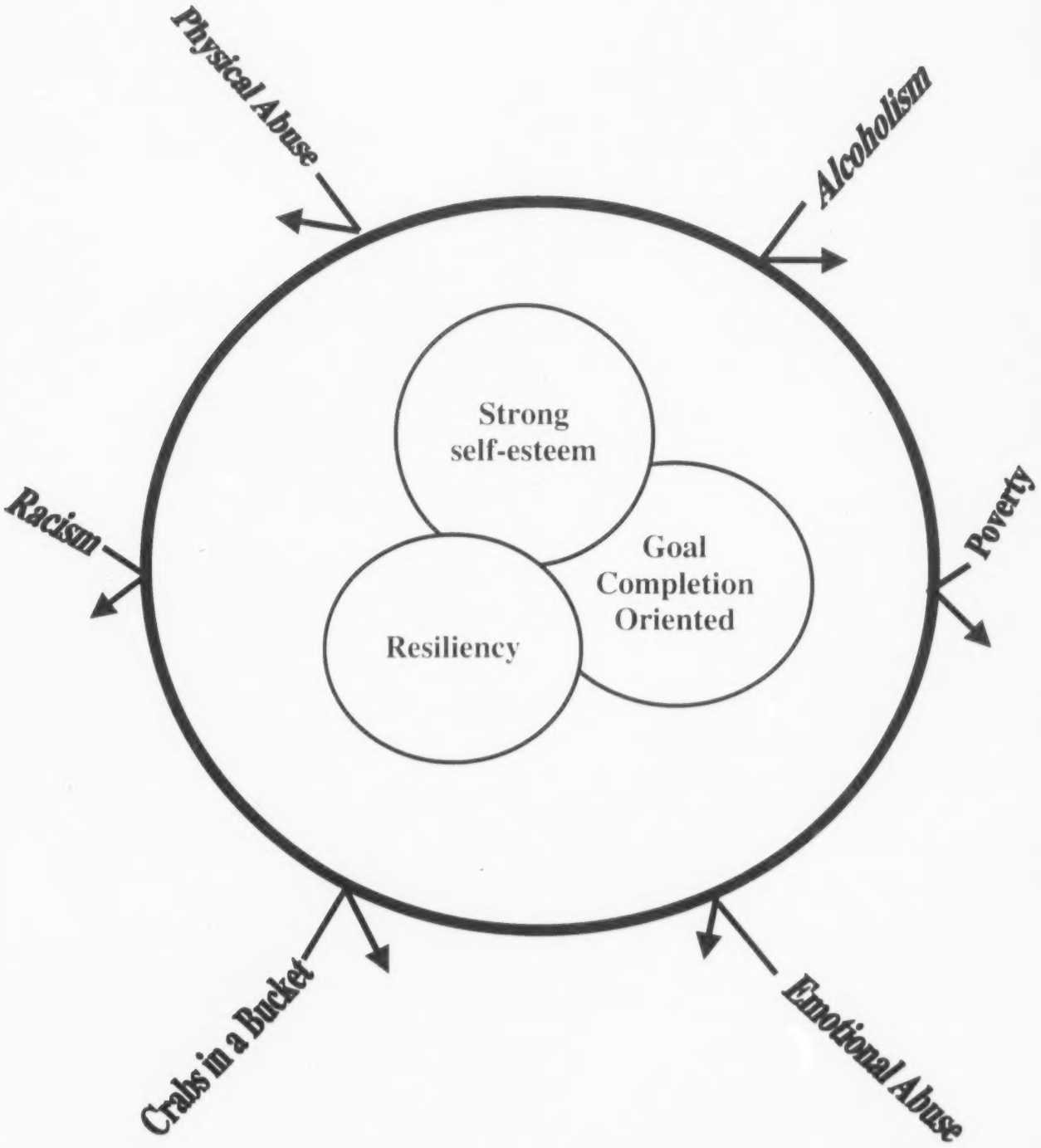
	enhanced cultural		transportation crucial
	• Learning enhanced resiliency with opportunity for greater understanding of cultural ways		
Institutional Factors			
	• Supportive faculty		
	• Supportive staff		
	• High Indian student population a positive		
	• Indian faculty a positive		
	• Instruction includes alternative learning approaches		
	• Cohort learning model a positive		
	• Cultural events on campus a positive		
	• Culturally relevant curriculum a positive		
Family Factors			
	• Poverty is pervasive		• Teen pregnancy = absenteeism, unpreparedness for college • Parents excited to become grandparents
	• Alcohol abuse (directly/indirectly)		
	• Instability in		

	family life		
	• Supportive of own children/ family members for education	• Active support from family to finish high school	• Lip service for education but no knowledge of how to follow through
	• Role models: parents were most positive and negative	• Acting as role models for their own children a strong motivator. In As change occurs there is an ability to adjust.	• Parental role models negative/poor adjustment to changes (i.e. drinking, verbal/physical abuse, etc.)
	• K-12 teacher remembered: the one who took the time	• Resiliency built in from family supports/role modeling	
	• Struggle with living in two worlds		
Individual Factors			
	• Multiple responsibilities: children; grandchildren extended family; full-time jobs;	• Kept up academically in K-12 school	• Difficulty keeping up in K-12 school
	• Attending college enhanced self-esteem	• Moved seldom during K-12 school	• Moved often during K-12 school
	• Learning style: combination of hands on; explanations; and demonstration	• Positive K-12 experiences, good grades	• Negative K-12 experiences: high absenteeism; poor grades
	• Few involved in Indian Ed Program in K-12 school.	• Had clear goals when entered tribal college	• Did not have clear goals when entered tribal college

		• Plan for the future built confidence and resiliency.	• Internalized oppression leads to planning for today only which leads to low self-esteem
		• Self knowledge (it's okay to be Indian) = self-esteem	• Lack of self-knowledge of who I am/where I fit in = low self-esteem, internalized oppression
		• Strong support system in place (A Plan "B" in place)	• No firm support system in place (No Plan "B" in place)

Attachment N

Completers



Attachment O

Noncompleters